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# The American "Recovery": Capitalist Legerdemain

Incapable of overcoming the crisis through its anti-inflation, tight money program of 1974, which accelerated the collapse of production and profits and led to a liquidity crisis; and equally incapable of resolving the crisis through this year's reflationary program which will--if continued--lead to hyperinflation\* and the erosion of its competitive position on the world market, the American bourgeoisie has decided to exorcize the crisis with . . . WORDS. It has begun to repeat the magic word "recovery" in the hopes of diverting the proletariat from the path of class struggle, calming the frightened and shaken middle classes and steadying its own jagged nerves. The American bourgeoisie has reverted to the slogan which it grasped at in the midst of the world crisis of the 30's: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." And so, for the moment, the bourgeoisie has adopted a confident tone:

No doubt about it any more: The recovery in business is vigorous, more vigorous than even the optimists expected. (Business Week, Nov. 3, 1975, p. 19)

In the City of London, the faithful servitors of U.S. capitalism have added their prestigious voice to those who see a bright future ahead for the American economy:

The third quarter statistics on the gross national product indicate conclusively not only that the recession [sic] is indubitably over but also that the rebound in activity is very vigorous . . . the economy will go sailing briskly into 1976, carried along by the momentum now being generated by a full-scale business cycle advance, (The Economist, Oct. 25, 1975, p. 70)

Such optimism, on the part of the bourgeoisie, in the midst of a devastating crisis is not at all unusual. Thus at the very end of 1935, Jesse H. Jones, chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, said with satisfaction that:

recovery has been attained and there is no longer any fear or any reason for fearing that something is going to fall down upon us, that some great failure or disaster may occur that would seriously disturb conditions.

President Roosevelt at the same time proclaimed it "a source of great satisfaction that at this moment conditions are such as to offer further substantial and widespread recovery." However, optimism could not prevail over the implacable and ever deepening crisis, which would not be cheated by the cheerful phrases of ideologues and politicians. In the aftermath of the 1936 Presidential elections, a new phase in the crisis obliterated the "recovery" which the bourgeoisie

\*After smug predictions that inflation was "under control," the Wholesale Price Index rose 1.8% in October, the largest increase in a year. This represents a 21.1% annual rate of inflation!

had so smugly proclaimed to be irreversable. From September 1937 to May 1938 industrial output declined 30% and unemployment rose 22%; in 1937 there were 6.4 million unemployed and in 1938 10 million. The "recovery" which had eluded the bourgeoisie for ten years, was at last attained through the inter-imperialist butchery of World War II; its basis was the slaughter of 50 million human beings and the destruction of the labor of generations of workers. Decadent capitalism knows no other "recovery" than this; it survives only through the cycle of crisis, war, reconstruction, new crisis, etc.

## Recovery: Myth or Reality

The "facts" over which the bourgeoisie today exults, and which have led it to speak so confidently of a "vigorous recovery" are based on the third quarter figures for Gross National Product. According to official government figures, real GNP rose at an annual rate of 11.2% in the third quarter of 1975--the sharpest quarterly rise since 1955. A careful scrutiny of the "facts," however, indicates the counterfeit nature of the "recovery" which the bourgeoisie is proclaiming.

First, even according to a leading Treasury economist, Herman I. Liebling, when the growth rate is adjusted for inflation on the basis of more accurate and sensitive measures than the official figures are based on, real GNP growth in the third quarter was not 11.2% but 9%. Moreover, more than half this gain in GNP was accounted for by a slowing in the rate of inventory liquidation. Once stocks have been brought into line with the realities of a contracting market, some temporary increase in production is inevitable; however, a "boom" of this nature cannot be sustained for more than a few months without some new impetus. According to Liebling the "vigorous" third quarter growth in real GNP, less inventory changes, turns out to be only 4.4%, compared with 4.6% in the second quarter, before the self-proclaimed "recovery" got underway. This more realistic figure falls short of the demand pickups of 5% to 6% typical of past recoveries during the postwar era.

What has fueled the 4.4% growth in the third quarter is a massive tax cut and a huge increase in Social Security payments dumped into the economy over the summer. The "recovery" turns out to be solely the result of a dose of Washington provided consumer purchasing power, of extraordinary pump-priming by the state. The extension of tax cuts into 1976--to the tune of \$15-28 billion\*--and a huge Federal budget deficit of up to \$88 billion is regarded as the price of both President Ford's re-election and the time needed to safely complete the long-term and massive compression of the real wages of the proletariat which is being carried out by

\*see bottom of next page for note



the bourgeoisie. Yet it is clear that such pump-priming does not generate a recovery--indeed its necessity reflects the complete absence of any signs of a genuine recovery--and that its continuation will produce a hyperinflation which will provoke the very collapse it is intended to avert.

Capitalist recovery historically depended on two inter-related conditions: expansion of effective demand, the opening of new markets AND reestablishment of an adequate rate of profit. Independently of other factors--compression of wages, intensification of labor, extension of the working day--the opening of new markets raises the rate of profit because it removes the dead weight of unused constant capital (plants, machines) which has dragged down the profit rate. Similarly, raising the rate of profit through a compression of wages, intensification of labor and extension of the working day, makes the national capital more competitive and permits it to grab markets from its rivals. Finally, raising the profit rate through higher productivity (cheapening the value of labor power) is possible only if accompanied by a growth in effective demand permitting the realization of the greater mass of surplus value produced.

The presence of these conditions would be manifested in the rapidly growing utilization of hitherto unused industrial capacity AND in new investments in plant, in the growth of capital spending by industry. The "recovery" about which the bourgeoisie so confidently speaks shows not a sign of this. With a massive slug of government "created" consumer purchasing power and the temporary winding down of inventory liquidation, use of manufacturing capacity has only crept up to 69% in the third quarter of 1975 from its low point of 66% in the second quarter; this compares with an 83% use of manufacturing capacity in 1973. Were the two factors responsible for this "recovery" taken away--as they will be--the real nature of the collapse, which is still in its early stages, would be startlingly obvious. With respect to capital spending, business fixed investment in the U.S. is today running 25% below the 1973 level. According to the Commerce Department, business will spend 11% less in real terms in 1975 than it did in 1974; moreover, the Conference board survey of capital appropriations predicts an additional 3% decline in spending for 1976--and this on the basis of expectations of a vigorous recovery! Yet, as even The Economist has had to recognize, "a recovery of investment is necessary to cure the slump."

In the absence of such a recovery the bourgeoisie's confident predictions of growth in 1976 are so much ideological prattle. The very elements which produced the "growth" in the third quarter of 1975--fiscal policy and

inventory changes--will tend to work AGAINST growth in 1976. The slowdown in inventory liquidation and the rebuilding of depleted stocks in some industries, which accounted for over half the third quarter gain in GNP, cannot be sustained in the midst of a saturated world market. On this point even the optimistic editors of Business Week are clear:

Any further stimulus from stock-building must await a more significant upturn in final demand. (Nov. 3, 1975, p. 26)

With all signs pointing to a further contraction of the world market in 1976, with capital spending continuing its sharp downturn and with government pump-priming incapable of "creating" demand on the scale of this past year, a new round of inventory liquidation is likely, thus creating further downward pressure on production.

Increased state and local government spending, in the form of workers' pay envelopes, "social services" and public works programs has been a key factor in recovery from every previous postwar downturn. Today, however, the contraction will be reinforced by the drastic cutbacks in such spending that are being made across the country. New York City is only the tip of the iceberg; 40,000 jobs have already been eliminated, "social services" slashed, and all new public works programs--housing, hospitals, schools, highways, government buildings--eliminated. New York State has now followed suit with a halt in all new construction programs. Thus one of the traditional underpinnings of "recovery" has been removed and the effects of this will only begin to be felt in 1976.

If state and local government spending already reflects the nation wide trend to austerity, pump-priming is still the order of the day in Washington . . . until after the Presidential election that is. The outlines of post-election policy are already being articulated by politicians, technocrats and businessmen, and the galloping inflation that is being set off by the present inflationary programs will intensify the necessity to deflate in the aftermath of the election. The cutbacks in social services on the state and local levels will then be followed by a savage attack on "social programs" on the federal level, thus adding a new round of downward pressure on production at the end of next year. What Business Week insists is "the robust early stages of a recovery" (Nov. 3, 1975, p. 24) will then appear as what it really is: a slight pause in the decline of production, which is only the most visible sign of the deepening and irreversible crisis of capitalism. The bold talk of recovery will be nakedly revealed as the bravado of a dying class which, as part of its effort to ward off its own demise, adds to the inflation which is sharply eroding the proletariat's living conditions--an inflation of words.

#### The Real Objectives of the American Bourgeoisie

While the bourgeoisie's confident pronouncements about recovery are groundless, this is not to say that the bourgeoisie has no strategy with which to react to the world crisis. Since the onset of the crisis, the American bourgeoisie has united around a two-pronged strategy designed to deflect the

\*The Congressional budget committees want to reflate through a temporary extension of this year's tax cuts, which would pump \$15 billion into the economy in 1976; President Ford wants permanent tax cuts of \$28 billion to stimulate the economy in 1976, which would be linked to a \$28 billion reduction in Federal spending on "social" programs beginning after the elections, in fiscal 1977.



worst effects of the crisis onto other capitalist states (both within its own bloc and its rivals') AND onto the working class.

The trade deficit of 1971, the first time in the 20th century that the U.S. had imported more than it had exported, brought home to the bourgeoisie the catastrophic nature of the crisis it faced. The reconstruction of war shattered European and Japanese industry and the overvalued dollar had strongly eroded the competitiveness of American capital on the world market; at the same time the American home market was being flooded by European and Japanese textiles, clothing, shoes, appliances, cameras, automobiles and steel. Heavy industry (steel, autos) shared the fate that had earlier befallen light industry (textiles, shoes, etc) and proved incapable of defending itself against foreign competition. In the midst of a saturated world market, American capital could only improve its position at the expense of other capitalist states--a task initiated with the two devaluations of the dollar (1971 & 1973) and a series of protectionist measures like the 1971 import surcharge.

Despite the sharp contraction of world trade over the past two years and the ever more bitter competition on the world market in which each capitalist state vies for a bigger piece of a shrinking cake, American capital has intensified its counter attack and restored much of its competitive edge at the expense of its rivals. The oil price rises which OPEC announced in the wake of the Yom Kippur war of 1973, and which the American bourgeoisie sought to present as the cause of the present economic crisis, in fact contributed to the strengthening of American capital vis a vis Europe and Japan. The famous "oil crisis" provoked by the price rises is a smokescreen hiding the reality of a massive transfer of wealth from Europe and Japan to the US, by way of Iran and the Arab producer states. Militarily and financially dependent on the US, incapable of taking independent action in the Middle East, Europe and Japan have had to accede to an arrangement whereby billions of additional dollars flow into the treasuries of the OPEC countries and are then "administered" by Wall Street or used to pay for American military equipment, capital goods and agricultural products, thus strengthening the American trade balance. In addition to this transfer of wealth to the US, European and Japanese goods have become less competitive on the world market as their prices have had to reflect the huge increase in the price of imported oil on which their economies are totally dependent. American capital has been the beneficiary of this "handicap" to which her competitors are subject.

It is not only the secondary powers within the American bloc who have had to give way before this offensive of the American bourgeoisie. American capital has made significant gains at the expense of Russian capital too. The detachment of Egypt and the Sudan from the Russian bloc has opened important new markets for the US in the Arab world. The US has also moved into the East European market, which is no longer completely controlled by the Russians and where German, Italian and Swedish capital has had to face a powerful challenge from the US. The granting of most

favored nations status to Romania earlier this year symbolizes the growing strength of US capital in this area which was closed to American penetration for more than 20 years. American capital has also moved successfully to take advantage of the limited opening of the Russian home market which European and Japanese capital had once hoped to monopolize. Finally, the temporary boom in the prices of primary products--which preceded their collapse over the past two years--momentarily fattened the monetary reserves of some Third World countries and thus provided markets for armaments and capital goods which the US has also taken a big share of. All of these have contributed to a trade surplus in the first nine months of 1975 at \$7.5 billion.

However, if the relative position of American capital on the world market has significantly improved, the continuing contraction of world trade has nonetheless reduced American exports--though at a much slower rate than the reduction in imports, which accounts for the positive trade balance. Moreover, the very markets in which US capital has been most successful will be incapable of continuing to absorb American goods at the present rate over the coming year. Thus, as the price of oil--in the face of sagging demand--has failed to keep pace with the sharply rising prices of manufactured goods, the OPEC countries are having to cutback on their projects for industrial development and on their military spending. In Eastern Europe, burgeoning trade deficits (in Poland nearly \$2 billion last year) are forcing drastic cutbacks in imports and severe austerity measures; the higher prices for oil that the Russians are imposing on their client states will mean that much less hard currency to pay for American imports. The Third World countries that benefited from the rising prices of primary products in the early 70's--Brazil, Argentina, Zaire, etc.--have now exhausted their monetary reserves as well as their capacity to borrow. Despite a series of devaluations, Argentina's trade balance is heavily in the red and the new finance minister Antonio Cafiero is frantically seeking debt rescheduling to avoid national bankruptcy. Mobutu's Zairian regime also totters on the brink of bankruptcy, while the Brazilian government has just announced a program whereby the huge state owned companies will have to reduce imports by 15% and stiff additional taxes will be slapped onto a wide range of imported goods. In Europe, which remains the biggest market for US goods, deteriorating trade balances--themselves largely the result of the dramatic improvement in America's competitive position--have led to frantic efforts to reduce imports. A slackening of American exports to Europe seems inevitable as these countries turn increasingly towards protectionism and economic nationalism. As effective demand diminishes and new trade barriers go up in all these markets, the American trade balance will sharply deteriorate in 1976.

The attempt by the American bourgeoisie to continue to deflect the worst effects of the crisis onto other capitalist states will now increasingly depend on the outcome of its efforts to make the American working class absorb the brunt of the crisis. It is this



aspect of its strategy to deal with the crisis that will most preoccupy the bourgeoisie over the coming year.

A massive assault on the standard of living of the proletariat is the precondition for a renewed and even more aggressive struggle for domination of the world market. The bourgeoisie:

must reduce the price of its commodities in order to grab its competitors' markets. To do this, the bourgeoisie can neither cut this price by reducing the part consisting of the constant capital which is utilized, nor pare its profits, which are indispensable if it is to make its capital more productive and competitive. The only thing that it can do is to act on that component of the price of its commodities that consists of variable capital--in other words, to attack the wages of the workers. (The Convulsions of World Capital, Inter/WR Pamphlet No. 2, p. 10)

The workers wage, which represents the equivalent of the cost of producing or reproducing the laborer himself (and making it possible for him to raise a family) is, under the prevailing conditions of state capitalism "paid" to the worker in two forms: one part paid directly to the worker by the company in his paycheck, the other disbursed to the worker by both the company and the state in the form of "social services." The draconian austerity measures which the American bourgeoisie is now trying to impose have as their object the slashing of the workers wages in both its forms.

The recent proposals of Arthur Burns, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, and the events surrounding the financial crisis of New York City both indicate the ferocity of the attack against the working class which the bourgeoisie has launched. The Burns proposal is intended to put the huge army of unemployed to work by providing public employment for jobless workers at wages "somewhat below the Federal minimum wage" of \$2.10 an hour. To make certain that the unemployed will accept work at greatly reduced wages, Chairman Burns advocates strongly cutting the length of unemployment compensation from the present emergency maximum of sixty-five weeks to "perhaps thirteen weeks or so." At one stroke Burns would both greatly reduce the huge costs of maintaining the unemployed--presently numbering more than 8 million, on the basis of official figures\*--by limiting unemployment compensation to less than four months, and institute a massive lowering not only of real wages, but of nominal wages as well, by creating a huge pool of cheap labor which would constitute a significant downward pressure on all prevailing wage rates. The reaction of the liberal New York Times to the Burns proposals indicates the broad support which a concerted attack on existing wage levels and the costs of maintaining the unemployed has within all segments of the bour-

geoisie. While disagreeing with the specifics of the proposal and calling for the creation of "real jobs, not makeshift and demeaning ones," the Times acknowledges that "some adaptation of the Burns approach can be extremely helpful" and recognizes that the jobs provided will not have to be at prevailing wage rates (Sept. 26, 1975)

The New York City financial crisis has been the occasion for an escalation of the attack on the working class that the bourgeoisie intends to expand to national proportions. The issues raised by the spectre of imminent default by the city on its \$12.3 billion in debt obligations have less to do with the threat of financial collapse of the banks and the disruption of the capital markets, than with the imposition of draconian austerity measures and the attempt to make the proletariat pay for the crisis.

The explosion of credit on which the capitalist system has come to depend in a vain attempt to offset the saturation of the world market, and which--following the downturn of the economy in 1971--reached unprecedented proportions in 1972-1973, has brought the financial system to the point of collapse. The 12 largest New York City banks now hold more than \$2.4 billion in New York City debt obligations alone--equivalent to 25% of their combined \$9.4 billion in capital! While the banking system totters on the brink, there is no segment of the bourgeoisie prepared to risk the bankruptcy and liquidation of several large banks in order to purge the bloated system. Whether or not New York City defaults, the banks will be rescued. The bill to provide federal loan guarantees for N.Y., which Wall Street favors, will save the city from default and protect the banks' investments. However, in the event that the proposed legislation does not become law, and the default which President Ford and Treasury Secretary Simon prefer takes place, the Federal Reserve Banks are committed to acting as "a lender of last resort," accepting the depreciated city paper at above its market value and crediting the stricken commercial banks with deposits at the Fed. It is the working class which will bear the brunt of the devastating inflationary effects of whichever of these ways of rescuing the banks is implemented.

At the very moment that the rescue of the banks fans the fires of inflation--by either adding credit on top of credit or simply printing more money--and further erodes the rapidly declining purchasing power of the working class, the austerity measures that are the compliment of the bank rescue operations will deliver new and even harsher blows to the standard of living of the proletariat. The media blitz about the need to avoid default at any cost . . . to the working class; the liberal politicians' exhortations to tighten our belts; the trade unions' frantic efforts to display what Albert Shanker, head of the teachers union, calls "civic responsibility;" the technocrats' candid warnings that things will be "even worse" if we refuse to make the "necessary sacrifices" now--all this is part of a well orchestrated effort by the bourgeoisie to create an atmosphere in which the working class will bow to the logic of decadent capitalism: impoverishment! The working class will face the same treatment with or

\*There are actually around 11 million unemployed in the US today.



without default; whether it is imposed by liberal politicians, the banker controlled Emergency Financial Control Board, a federal board headed by Treasury Secretary Simon (under the proposed federal loan guarantee) or a federal court and referee (as a result of default): tens of thousands of additional layoffs; further drastic cutbacks in "social services" (schools, hospitals, fire houses, sanitation, housing, etc.); new sales taxes and a city and/or state income tax surcharge; the "renegotiation" of wages and pensions i.e. the breaking of all existing labor contracts. Moreover, NY is only the testing ground for the austerity measures that the bourgeoisie will attempt to extend throughout the country over the next year.

In the face of this brutal attack the proletariat is beginning to marshal its strength. The sanitationmen's wildcat in NY this past summer and the coal miners wildcat in Appalachia, which saw 80,000 of the 125,000 bituminous coal miners in the US leave the pits during August, is only a faint indication of the class war to come. The bourgeoisie has thus far kept order in the ranks of its wage slaves thanks to the role of the unions. In New York City the sanitationmen's union moved quickly to crush the wildcat, while all of the municipal unions negotiated a wage freeze, pledged themselves to implement new productivity quotas i.e. speedup, and used their pension funds to purchase NY City paper and avert default. In the coal fields, Arnold Miller, the head of the United Miner Workers, received the thanks of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association for his unions' efforts to break the wildcat and get the men back to work.

However, the decisive struggles which will pit workers against companies, unions, and the state are still to come. If the bourgeoisies' objectives are now clear, the outcome of its strategy to impose a New Order of austerity, discipline and impoverishment on the working class hangs in the balance. Just as the insurmountable contradictions of a dying capitalism condemn the bourgeoisie's much ballyhooed recovery to be STILLBORN, so the grave diggers capitalism has itself created--the proletariat--BAR THE WAY to the success of the bourgeoisies' strategy for dealing with the crisis it cannot overcome.

MAC INTOSH

## Greetings To Internationalisme

We welcome to our ranks the Belgian group Internationalisme, which has been formed by comrades from the groups Journal des Luttes de Classe, Revolutionaire Raden Socialisten, and Vrijen Raden Socialisten. These comrades have dissolved the previously mentioned groups and have requested membership in the International Communist Current both on the basis of programmatic unity and on their understanding of the necessity for coherent intervention in the class struggle on an international scale. Their request for membership has been accepted by the International Bureau pending ratification by the next International Congress.

The new Belgian group will edit a magazine in French and Flemish called Internationalisme, a name which is the same in both languages. The choice of this name both emphasizes the Current's political and historical continuity with the Left Communist revue of the same name in France in the 40's and stresses the intrinsic, primary necessity of an internationalist perspective for the proletariat. The contents of their first issue will be:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Crisis in Belgium
- 3) International Situation
- 4) Spain
- 5) Leftists to the Rescue of Capitalism
- 6) Portugal
- 7) An Address to Revolutionaries

Our comrades in Belgium will make a vital and profound contribution to the work of all of us. We extend our warmest welcome to them.



# Crisis in the Eastern Bloc

1974 ended with a generalized world-wide chorus on the theme of the crisis, and it looks like 1975 will end the same way. Every possible interpretation of the crisis has been offered: an "oil crisis", a "structural crisis", an "energy crisis", even a "crisis of civilization". All these different explanations have gone along with a sharp rise in prices and unemployment and appeals for lower consumption and other austerity measures.

But the "crisis of civilization" and the "oil crisis" have not been very successful as "explanations" of the deepening of the current crisis of capitalism. And so a new "explanation" for the situation is pulled out of the hat to show that, despite it all, the system can still pull through. "In 1975, the rate of growth [in the USSR] will be 6.5% according to American predictions . . . . It is an incontestable success in contrast to the Western economies hit by stagnation and unemployment." (1) The same people who, not so long ago, enthusiastically affirmed that France would remain an oasis of peace in a world of crisis now repeat with a straight face that the time has come to look towards the East; in the general panic "a prospective arena for our export trade" (2) must be found at all cost. This frantic search for markets carried on by every nation, finds expression in repeated attempts to arrange trade agreements, such as those between Europe and the United States, between the Middle East and Europe, and the USSR and Europe.

## Integration into the World Market

The USSR is negotiating contracts for supplies of petroleum products with West Germany, Austria and France, similar to those which already exist with East Germany and Czechoslovakia. The dealings between the United States and the USSR are big news at the moment, but all is not going well. Snarl-ups are attributed by the French Communist Party to the greed of American imperialism. When, however, everything goes smoothly they too are all smiles. Even the meeting between Brezhnev and Giscard was described as an event of "mutual interest" and "exemplary co-operation".

In this chorus, "co-operation" and "detente" provide the new leitmotifs. As G. Marchais, the boss of the French Communist Party, spelt out in his polemic with the French Socialist Party, it is a question of "resolving the problems of the modern world without a crisis." (3) Against the problems which world capitalism now faces--finding markets in order to dispose of its products--the "private" bourgeoisie joins with the Communist Party in its praise of the "socialist" countries, (in the hope that by advocating "socialism" the working class will be calmed). The Banker, a Glasgow economic journal, proclaims that the "Soviet economy is more stable, less exposed to destructive shocks than is the Western economy. If, as we believe, social

disorders will destroy us . . . and if the Soviet leaders are capable of keeping control both on the economic and the social plane, then perhaps the weak spots of their system are the price they have agreed to pay in exchange for the stability we lack". (4) Friends and enemies alike, all the diverse factions of the world capitalist class are agreed on what remedies are needed to stabilize the social situation in order to be able to dedicate themselves to the war that they delicately label "economic". It is the left capitalist factions which are in the best position to control the working class, to line it up behind each national capital, since it is the left which represents the political veneer for the general economic tendency towards fuller state capitalism.

The left asserts that half of humanity will escape the horrors of the present crisis. The present condition of the international money market, the saturation of the world market, increasing world tensions which more and more produce open conflict everywhere; these are mere trivialities for these malicious ideologues of the "socialist paradise" and of "expansion". For them the East European market escape, the laws of world capitalism because production and distribution there do not have the same capitalist nature.

Nevertheless, the facts speak otherwise: "Decreases in production and sale of such goods as television sets, record players, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and refrigerators in Poland; of radio sets in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria can be attributed to a saturation of the home market, taking into account the price and quality, and also to some extent, the simultaneous expansion of this type of production in all Eastern countries--a fact which has reduced exports within the bloc." (5) It is the possibility or impossibility of exporting which determines the health of the home market. The realization of the global profit contained in the goods produced in one country can only take place by selling them "outside" the home market. In our epoch, capitalism, which must at all cost no longer has any outlets. In the East as in the West, production is destined for exchange and the law of value dominates the situation: just when the East has problems in selling and is turning to the West, the West has similar problems and turns to the East.

In 1973, when the wheat harvest in the USSR was particularly good, Russia signed the contract of the century with the United States for massive imports of American wheat. Even in 1973 the proportion of imports coming from the "West" was 20% of the revenue of Poland, 40% of that of Hungary. The signs indicated that all was not well within the Eastern bloc. It was claimed on the one hand

\*For a detailed analysis of the operations of the law of value in the Eastern bloc see "State Capitalism And the Law of Value", Internationalism 2.



that the energy crisis was not serious while on the other hand the necessity for cutting back on the consumption of oil was explained in terms of the prices of imports from capitalist countries having quadrupled in a few months. (6)

This so-called oil or energy crisis (which in fact is but the icing on the cake of capitalism's real problems) functions as a tool used by the capitalist class in its efforts to cut consumer consumption even within that "oasis of stability" the "socialist market". The price of oil, for example, has doubled in Czechoslovakia since March 30, 1974 and speed limits on roads have also been introduced. At the end of 1973, some distinguished economists of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung pointed out that the "oil crisis would have unfavorable repercussions on the economy of the Eastern bloc as a whole." (7) One minute we are assured that there is not the slightest hint of an energy problem in the Eastern bloc and the next minute we hear that well-worn mystification concerning the "oil crisis" being trotted out once again . . . so the game goes on.

In all this the dependence of the Eastern bloc on the world market stands out clearly. COMECON, a kind of East European Common Market, moreover, follows world market prices with only slight variations.

#### Decomposition

Objections to the fact that the Eastern bloc is suffering from the effects of the crisis are numerous, starting with the most brazen apologies for the USSR. Certainly, the USSR seems to escape the effects of the crisis better than its "partners", the other bloc countries. The domination that Russia exercises over its satellites through commercial agreements which it has succeeded in imposing by virtue of its "military protection" allows the USSR to appear less dependent on the world market than its partner states--particularly as regards its share of imports. But this situation is no different than the one prevailing in the American sphere of influence where the United States benefits from the same type of advantages.

The effects of economic stagnation are beginning to be felt. The difficulty, indeed the impossibility of enlarging markets, is expressed in the disorganization of production within each unit, each region, each nation and ultimately each bloc of capital. It is the same old struggle over the ever-shrinking cake!

The eagerness to open the doors to businessmen, who were praised by Brezhnev in the course of his meeting with Nixon, goes hand in hand with Podgorny's appeals against "economic pillage" at home. Podgorny has asked "that the press increase its efforts to denounce the crooks, the speculators, and other swindlers of the system, whose activities are daily pointed out in the newspapers [and] whose widespread evil doings are a secret to nobody." (8) The food question seems to be the government's biggest worry. Those blamed by the regime for being responsible for these difficulties are termed "social renegades", "hooligans", and "idlers". When this "pillage" takes the form of a systematic diversion of food and other commodities from their official destination to the black market one can say that "hooligans are responsible.

Imagine Paris in the hands of black marketers. Imagine a "clandestine" textile factory of 200 workers installed in a cellar beneath a theater . . . like the one in Tbilisi which sells to other states within the USSR but not to its own.

State regulation is never total and the exploiting class has long since accommodated itself to this fact. Increasing economic difficulties accelerate social decomposition and necessitate the strengthening of the state for more efficient intervention. The appeal launched by Podgorny is clear in this respect: "Honest workers, collectives, organizations, strive to produce more, strive to meet the rising contract quotas, struggle selflessly for increased productivity and exploitation of new resources." Here, there is nothing about the struggle against delinquency but the message is the same: defence of national capital; preservation of "socialist property". (9)

When in difficulty, the system must attempt to rationalize production. In the USSR, in agriculture, the government tries to re-organize Sovkhozes and Kolkhozes to maximize profits, to cut out everything that does not make a sufficient contribution. In the management of enterprises there is also a reshuffling: Gvichiani (10), Kosygin's son-in-law, replied to a question concerning the reintroduction of the profit motive by stating: "No, not, profit, profitability . . . It is a matter of rational organization but there also must be moral and economic stimulants." A whole generation of American-style managers open to new methods, have appeared on the scene. It is possible to foresee the growth of industrial concentrations, modelled on the Western pattern, aimed at assuring a higher level of productivity.

Everywhere the search continues for a solution to the crisis which would be capable of preventing a sudden collapse brought on by the bankruptcy of the system. The appeals are the same: decentralize, re-organize, etc.--all, of course, done in the name of the workers. In Cuba, the government even indulges in the experiment of instituting "the elected and revocable power of the masses"; if necessary the workers must be made to manage their own exploitation. And there will be no lack of appeals to nationalists of every stripe for the creation of a "united front of patriots". In Cuba, more than ever, the device used is: "My work, my family, my C.D.R." (Committee for the Defence of the Revolution).

Nationalist and regionalist reactions are becoming intensified. The Communist Part of the Soviet Union, once again, has had to clamp down on the Ukrainian Communist Party which had been getting a bit too uppity. Governments in every country rival each other in their appeals, warnings, threats and weedlings. In spite of all the similarities running through the numerous manifestations of the crisis, the left continues to remind us of the "differences" that exist between East and West, especially of course, where the working class is concerned.

#### Unemployment and Inflation

La Vie Ouvriere,\* on January 15, 1975, dedicated fifteen pages to the task of per-

\*The newspaper of the Stalinist led trade union federation, the CGT.



suading us that "there are countries without unemployment". In East Germany "if anyone is threatened with unemployment, it is the employee of the placement bureau". It only takes three days to find another job, etc. All of social life revolves around the problems of "the work force". The caption of a picture showing smiling Bulgarian miners, explains that while the mine is closing, the workers are happy because they know that they will be redeployed, perhaps into the building industry. A rational mechanism for the sale of labor power exists there, so they say. Though they recognize "the possibility of layoffs" stemming from organizational needs, this occurs only . . . "with the consent of the union." And while they realize that problems do exist, "french workers would be happy to have such problems."

Joking aside in spite of this idyllic picture, "Czechoslovakia recommended austerity measures from July 1973"; while Hungary "has attempted to minimize the psychological effects of the oil crisis." (11) Every East European country instituted austerity measures in 1973, limiting public consumption and free electricity. But what are these "psychological" effects? One reads in Pravda: "The worker complains about no longer having the benefits of days off with his family: his wife, like other factory workers, works the whole week, without a day off and without receiving any bonuses. He must remember that no one forces women to work on Sunday. It is a voluntary, personal choice. The administration has never issued any orders on this subject. But it was decreed that they could not count on either getting holiday pay or a 'progressive wage' if they did not help out voluntarily."\*\* (January, 1974)

With wages amounting to roughly \$350 a month for two people, it costs \$1 for a package of butter, \$1.60 for a package of coffee. The intentional scarcity of certain products, whose prices are fixed at very high levels, forces the working class to "save", and thus to finance the class which exploits it. Officially prices do not increase; however, the latest model of Volga car costs 65% more than the one preceding it, even though an engineer would be hard pressed to see any differences between them.

The evolution which world capitalism had undergone since the Second World War during the period of reconstruction neared its end around 1963-64, a period highlighted by the fall of Krushchev and of faction fights in China. Every country in the Eastern bloc knew that the growth rate of the previous period was no longer possible. 1968 in Czechoslovakia was a harsh warning to the USSR, the potentates of the East. In Poland, 1970 marked the reawakening of the class struggle.

In 1966, the Polish magazine, *Polityka* stated: "It is obvious, and we must become more aware of the fact, that the population must choose between a significant increase in jobs and a restriction in the number of jobs with an improvement in real wages;

there are no other solutions." The working class has learned this to its cost and it was an unprecedented inflation together with a scarcity of food which pushed the class to directly attack the state and the unions in 1970.

The decadence of the system forces the capitalist class to engage in immense unproductive expenditures: the so-called service sector grows endlessly; the bureaucracy becomes enormous. Marx analyzed the phenomenon of unemployment in the era of periodic crises; the mechanism remains the same in the epoch of permanent crisis. Marx declared: "There is periodically too much capital and as a consequence too many workers." Marx, then, asked this question: "In relation to what is there too much capital and too many workers?," and he answered: "In relation to the possibilities of realization under 'normal' conditions assuring the necessary profit. It is because the market becomes periodically too constricted, that a part of capital must be put to sleep, and for the same reason a part of labor must be sacked." (R. Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*)

*La Revue des Pays de L'Est* (No. 3, January 1973) pointed out that "unemployment reappeared again as a serious problem towards the second half of the 1960's." In the magazine *Kultura* (no. 12/291, December 1971), it is stated that "instead of growing, the standard of living of the workers has diminished 2.5% per annum." Nonetheless, for that catechism of propaganda, *Etudes Sovetiques*, life is still rosy: "Most food prices have remained stable for years, even decades, in the USSR (sic)." In "scientific" support of this phenomenon, a Soviet economist declared in August 1974: "We have no inflation, only price rises." *Etudes Sovetiques* added that " . . . in the bookshops, the books are relatively inexpensive," whereas recently there was a proposal made that the purchase of a book be accompanied by the return of 33 pounds of old paper to the state.

The general tendency of the world capitalist system towards statification is a necessity for the exploiting class. Competition demands that every capital put the whole of social life under an apparatus of political and military domination in order to confront the two fundamental and definitive obstacles to the perpetuation of capitalism: the saturation of the world market and the rising class struggle. The solution for the bourgeoisie would be world war: but the immediate perspective is proletarian class struggle. The left factions of the bourgeoisie are the most capable for dividing the world proletariat over the question of the subtle differences which exist between the several apparent variants of capitalist exploitation. The leftists, the ultimate mystifiers of capitalism, bring with their "critical" theories a not unimportant prop for the diversion of the class struggle into capitalist objectives.

#### Theoretical Contortions

The not so subtle Stalinists, whether they wield the carrot (promising the workers a painless exploitation), or the stick (sending the army against the working class) always insist that socialism already exists and that in the West only a "narrow clique" of big financiers and wicked bosses are responsible for the slump into which we have

\*\*One is reminded of the signs which appeared in the sweatshops of the N.Y. garment district in the early part of the twentieth century "IF YOU DON'T WORK SUNDAY DON'T COME IN ON MONDAY".



been been plunged.

As for the Trotskyists, they put themselves forward as the ones to tear away the facade of the Stalinist counter-revolution, to correct the deviations, the errors, the counter-revolutionary maneuvers of a handful of bureaucrats who have "degenerated", who have "deformed" the "workers' states". The basis and material foundations of the class struggle are swept away to be replaced by the problem of managing society without touching, or only slightly disturbing, the relations of production. For them there is no need for a world revolution to oust the "parasitical caste", but a simple "political revolution", a change of bad leaders for good ones.

These same Trotskyists, at the time when the Polish proletariat was confronting the capitalist state in 1970, hastily gave their blessing to the new "political revolution" and then concentrated their real energies on applauding the nationalist and terrorist reactions of a faction of the Spanish bourgeoisie which had its back to the wall, (the Burgos Trial of Basque Nationalists). Today collections are made within the leftist milieu for Eva Forest, suspected of complicity in the assassination of Carrero Blanco; little or nothing is said about the confrontations between the police and an infuriated proletariat which has generalized its struggles throughout Spain.

All of this confusion is justified by theoretical contortions and aberrations of a kind such as this: "The principal means of production, stripped of their commodity form, are directly produced as use values . . . .As long as there is scarcity, consumer goods remain commodities." (D. Bensaid, *Revue Critique de L'Economie Politique, La Nature des Pays de L'Est*) As if by chance, commodities in the hands of the bureaucrats are "socialist", those destined for the workers are not! The political implications are clearly developed at great length: in the Eastern bloc countries, "the social roots of these [workers'] movements are very different from those anti-capitalist movements that we know", because they "do not call into question the social relations based on the collective appropriation of the means of production . . . but direct all their efforts to the confiscation of political power." For the Eastern bloc countries to be truly socialist, it will be enough, therefore, for the worker to sell his labor power to the Trotskyist state, after political power has been confiscated from the hands of the "parasitical caste". In the Eastern bloc, "the collective appropriation of the means of production" is merely capitalism concentrated in the hands of the state, the "ideal capitalist" of which Engels spoke, and the most advanced form of a tendency which has been universal since 1914.

History has proven that the worst mystification is that which makes a virtue out of the defeats of the working class, which embalms revolutionaries and idealizes them. The cornerstone, the ultimate argument used to defend the USSR is: "1917 happened". To pretend to find a material gain of the world revolutionary wave of the years 1917-20 in any corner of the world, is to deny the global character of capitalism in our epoch; it is to

cut up the working class, seeing each section as having different tasks according to place, time, sex, color, language, climate, etc. And this is precisely the aim of the bourgeoisie in its efforts to gain a free hand to manage capital.

The degree of "socialism" or the "workers" character of a society is also measured differently depending on the sophistication of the thermometer which is used. In the ranks of "Marxists" blinded by attachments to any glimmer of hope or by a taste for novelty, it is pointed out that "there exists a sort of second world market in which exploitation of the underdeveloped countries as practised by the advanced countries, is restricted or absent". (Paul Mattick, *International Socialist Journal*)

The period of reconstruction, during which the arms economy has kept on growing, has been essentially characterized by the persistence and exacerbation of inter-imperialist conflicts, where the big powers confront each other through the medium of the interposed local bourgeoisies: Indo-China, the Middle East, Bengal, Korea, Biafra, Kurdistan, Cyprus, etc. Perhaps the Eastern Imperialism's intervene in these conflicts for philanthropic reasons?

The Bordigists have found something "progressive", something positive in the appearance of the so-called youthful capitalism resulting from these "revolutions from above". Why not from behind?

The world economic system has no solution to the crisis. The proliferation of conflicts, as yet localized, in which each bloc gives support to one faction or another of the local bourgeoisie, is the harbinger of the only perspective capitalism has open to it: generalized war. But the stubborn resistance to the assaults of capital by the world working class, which, in the East as in the West, has emerged openly after fifty years of counter-revolution, raises the possibility of world revolution to the forefront. Faced with the attempts of the bourgeoisie to divide and mystify it, above all with the desperate attempt to prove the existence of "socialism in one country" and the various "worker's states", the proletariat will respond as it has already indicated in Poland in 1970 and in Egypt in 1975.

M.G.

Translated from *Revolution Internationale*, No. 13

#### Footnotes:

1. *L'Express*, Jan. 13-19, 1975.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Le Monde*, Jan. 14, 1975.
4. *December*, 1973.
5. *Notes et Etudes Documentaires*, April 1974.
6. Declarations by the President of the Czechoslovakian Price Bureau in *Le Monde*, April 2, 1974.
7. *Le Monde*, March 8, 1974.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. Interviewed by *L'Express* in July, 1974.
11. *L'Europe del'Est en 1973*, La Documentation Francaise.



# CZECHOSLOVAKIA: A Change in the Ruling Clique?

The open letter which Dubcek, head of the Czech capitalist state until the intervention of the Russian imperialist army in 1968, sent last fall to the Husak government (and through the government to his own bourgeoisie) has been made public in Der Spiegel and subsequently in Le Monde.

In this letter, Dubcek makes himself the expression of the "crisis of confidence" which reigns throughout the country. Making himself the spokesman of the true national interest which has been flouted by the present "non-representative" government, he denounces the "misuse of power" which has trampled "democracy and socialist legality." Even more serious: "the masses no longer understand the party" and "the working class, the most important (sic) element, which holds power in every socialist country, feels itself to be manipulated by those in power." And Dubcek appoints himself the defender of the exploited by denouncing the "increasingly coercive work methods which have been introduced."

In clear language, Dubcek is publicly putting in his bid for power. The former head of the bourgeois order is sending out a serious warning to his class, which can be translated as: "If you don't let up a little to relieve the tension by putting some democracy in the wheels of exploitation, the working class, our mortal enemy, may take hasty, even revolutionary action as was the case in Poland in 1970. Because I enjoy such great prestige in the country, I am the only person capable of avoiding this mortal danger to our class."

Dubcek's reappearance on the political scene is explained by the particularly explosive situation in Czechoslovakia today. In the economic sphere, the situation is catastrophic, as it is in most of the Eastern countries. The rise in raw material prices in October 1973, and more recently (the beginning of 1975) the rise in Russian oil prices which have practically doubled, have greatly handicapped the export possibilities of Czech capital, which was already in crisis before the Yom Kippur war. Unable to deal with competition and find buyers for their production, Czechoslovakia, like all capitalist countries, is suffering the pangs of overproduction: electrical appliances, the automobile sector--particularly important in the national economy--to the point where, in mid-1973, the government imposed a reduction in the price of the Skoda. Although inflation has not reached the proportions of Poland or Hungary, it is severely felt by the workers without being counterbalanced by wage increases; wages have stagnated since 1968.

As far as the capitalist "solution" to crisis is concerned--what Dubcek politely calls the new "work methods," that is to say a rise in the rate of exploitation through continual speed-up--these methods have increasingly come up against fierce resistance from the working class. In a recent issue

(#18) Der Spiegel offers some enlightenment:

The Prime Minister Strougal promised . . . severe punishment for those responsible for a series of fires and explosions. . . . Annual statistics only for the year 1973 show 2000 cases of poor driving of trucks. . . . The state security service counts about 300 cases of serious sabotage, even leading to deaths. A wave of resistance and sabotage is spreading in Czechoslovakia.

This would already be unsettling enough for the bourgeoisie if there wasn't an organized working class opposition developing at the same time:

Leaflets distributed at many factories speak of protest actions which show an open discontent of the workers directed against the regime: in the industrial complexes of Prague, in the steel works in eastern Slovakia, among the railroad workers.

According to Der Spiegel, "to coordinate these activities, a 'workers council party' seems to have been created which affirms that all workers must denounce the role of the unions as accomplices of the government. . . . In their leaflets the anti-party stresses the first step: a general strike."

If it is still difficult to understand the role played by this "workers council party" (a bourgeois co-optation of the workers' discontent or a genuine expression of the class?), it becomes clear that organized resistance of the workers to capital in crisis is developing more and more.

In these conditions the bourgeoisie is concerned about de-fusing the workers' discontent through a change of the clique in power. Only Dubcek, who has gained wide popularity in coming out as a genuine "patriot", something that is very important in Czechoslovakia where anti-Russian nationalist sentiments are very strong, is capable of mystifying the workers. The only real obstacle to Dubcek coming to power is the agreement of the Russians who eliminated him from power before. In his open letter, Dubcek holds the "brother countries" responsible for the intervention of the armies of the Warsaw Pact and eulogizes the "politics of detente of the USSR" which is not to be held responsible for the occupation. The Russians, who want to avoid a new Gdansk which would risk carrying all of Eastern Europe, including Russia, with it this time, show an increasingly favorable attitude toward Dubcek: "Two years ago, Soviet emissaries made contact with the fallen reformer-communists. Last summer Dubcek made a secret trip to Moscow at the invitation of Kremlin chiefs: for a general discussion." (Der Spiegel #18).



A change of political cliques is on the agenda in the East as in the West. Against the danger of workers revolution which will increasingly become the number one problem with the acceleration of the crisis, the bourgeoisie, whatever form it may take, can no longer continue to govern as it has in the past, through open military and police dictatorship. To preventively defuse the risks of workers' explosions and make the workers accept the necessary sacrifices it has to have a new angle, the "democratic" card. Let us not forget that the coup d'etat of April 25th in Portugal took place to avoid an explosion which was foreshadowed by a series of unprecedented strikes at the beginning of 1974. In Czechoslovakia the bourgeoisie is also undoubtedly aware of the lessons of Portugal. The more the change in government is held off, the more the democratic mystification risks losing its force, as is the case in Spain.

It is worth noting that any change in cliques can only be made and will only be made with the agreement of the dominant imperialist power: Russia. It is the same as Portugal where the participation of the Portuguese Communist Party in the government is carried out within the framework of NATO. Thus a general tendency of today's world is confirmed: the two great imperialist powers strengthen their economic hold over their respective spheres of influence, but on the political level, national, "patriotic" cliques which do not appear to be linked to the imperialist power must be put into the government. In his open letter, Dubcek makes a big show of saying that ties with the Social-Democratic government of Brandt must be strengthened. We can bet on the fact that when the "democratic" cliques eventually come to power in the East, it will be with a lot of "anti-imperialist" bluster just like the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal, so as to better control the workers still in the grip of illusions. It is in the name of the defense of "freedom" that the bourgeoisie is preparing to confront the workers. And when the workers go on strike, they will surely be told (as in Portugal) that they are "playing into the hands of imperialism."

In the East as in the West, with the same crisis, capital prepares to use the same "solutions."

CHARDIN  
translated from  
Revolution Internationale # 15

## Crisis in Hungary

Recent developments in Hungary have amply confirmed the analysis in the preceding articles. For some time before the crisis really began to accelerate, Hungary was much touted in the West as an example of a liberal trend in the Eastern bloc, and much was made of the growing prosperity which Hungary's "new middle classes" had been enjoying as a result of

economic and political reforms. These reforms, in fact, followed the pattern set in other East European countries such as Czechoslovakia and Rumania: in response to intolerable bureaucratic stagnation, measures of economic decentralization were taken by "progressive" factions of the bureaucracy with a view to restoring profitability to each enterprise. In Hungary in 1968, each enterprise was given the power to determine production levels and wages according to its own profit levels.

These reforms brought considerable benefits to the technocrats and enterprise managers whose salaries now depended less on bureaucratic decrees than on the efficiency of their own enterprise. They were the people who began to be able to conspicuously consume many of the luxuries of "Western" living--cosmetics, private cars, holidays. But as for the class for whom the state claims to be building socialism, the proletariat, the new reforms brought increased exploitation and a growing insecurity about their buying power, which in 1971 led to a number of strikes in Budapest. The workers had been given more and more piece work with less and less time to produce their quotas, and large wage gaps opened up between the productive enterprises and the more backward factories.

In response to the workers' discontent with these developments, the trade unions have been asserting their "independence" vis-a-vis the state, the better to pose as the workers' defenders. In September 1973 the Secretary General of the Hungarian trade unions demanded general wage rises of 4-8% to apply throughout industry. The unions have strongly criticized the liberal reformers, and have been taking advantage of the right, enshrined in recent labor legislation, to veto local enterprise production plans. In other words the Hungarian unions have become defenders of the right to strike. At a time when the working class is responding to its deteriorating living standards with increasing combativity, the agents of capital within the class must everywhere radicalize their language and their activities. But the liberal reforms in Hungary are coming under fire not only from the shop floor. The deepening world crisis is hitting Hungary even harder than most of its Eastern bloc neighbors. Hungary has little in the way of raw materials and its main supplier, the USSR, has not hesitated to raise the price of commodities indispensable to the Hungarian economy. These pressures have led the state to raise the price of gasoline and oil fuel, for example, by 40%.

The sudden weakness of the Hungarian economy vis-a-vis the world market has given new strength to the centralizing tendencies in the state. The 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, held in March 1975 and attended approvingly by Brezhnev, endorsed moves towards the restoration of central control over the economy as well as a tightening-up in the field of ideology. The crisis leaves every national faction of the capitalist class with no alternative but to intensify the despotism of the state.

C.D. Ward



# On the organization question

## A Resolution of the first congress of Revolution Internationale

### Introduction

This document on the question of organization is the text of a resolution passed at the recent national congress of Revolution Internationale, our Current's section in France. It was accepted as a part of R.I.'s platform, replacing an earlier, less explicit, formulation. The Current as a whole has evolved in its understanding of the complexity of this question and this document, although in a formal sense written by our comrades in R.I. is, in fact, a reflection of the discussions and work of the entire Current.

The document deals with the question of organization both from the point of view of the workers' councils, the unitary organizations of the class as a whole, and the revolutionary groups which are defined by the defense of a revolutionary communist program, a specific orientation offered as a contribution to the struggle as a whole. These two aspects of organization within the working class struggle are different parts of the same movement; they are not separate or opposed to each other as the "Leninists" and the "anarchist-libertarians" claim.

The text condemns as counter-revolutionary the Leninist substitution of the party for the class as a whole: "The self-organization of the class struggle and the exercise of power by the class as a whole is not just one road to communism which can be balanced out against others--IT IS THE ONLY ROAD;" while affirming that: "Those tendencies which deny any need for organization and intervention by revolutionaries . . . condemn themselves to non-existence and therefore to becoming agents of a withering of class consciousness by depriving the class of one of its fundamental instruments." In short, the organization of revolutionaries is a necessary part of the whole, a contribution towards and within the class-wide organization of workers councils. Neither one of these instruments of the class can be substituted for the other.

The document tries to put these questions in the context of the development of class consciousness: how does this consciousness develop, why is it an all-important factor in the proletarian revolution, how can revolutionaries contribute to the generalization of consciousness. The "thesis" form adopted in this text does not aim to explain each aspect in detail but rather to give the reader a general framework which integrates all the different elements into a coherent vision.

"The effort towards class consciousness [in the proletariat] has always existed since the very beginnings of the class and will continue until its disappearance in communist society. It is in this sense that revolutionary minorities have existed in all periods as an expression of this constant effort. But the scope, the influence, the type of activity and mode of organization of these minorities

are closely linked to the conditions of class struggle."

The text traces the activities of revolutionary minorities in periods of reaction or counter-revolution and in periods of revolutionary upsurge. It tries to stress the importance of the role of the small revolutionary groups growing up today, not only in terms of their contribution to immediate struggles but in terms of their political contribution to the preparation of the proletarian party of tomorrow, when class struggle will have become intense and generalized.

Although the scope of revolutionary activity may change with the conditions of class struggle, certain elements of the revolutionary organization's task do not change: 1) its international character 2) the need for a clear programmatic basis for intervention.

The proletariat is an international class: its struggle and the elaboration of its revolutionary program can only be carried out on an international level.\* In the U.S. context this fundamental fact is often obscured by the influence of bourgeois ideology which penetrates the revolutionary milieu and tends to isolate the "specific conditions" of the U.S. from the world context of struggle and political discussion. Political internationalism is more often interpreted to be a case of organizing "solidarity campaigns" for the victims of repression, for example, or a simple question of analyzing world current events rather than a full concern for international discussion and regroupment.

The geographical expanse of the U.S. is also a factor in encouraging localistic evolution: groups trying to contribute to a revolutionary orientation spring up in different cities with little or no contact between them.

In recent months however, efforts have been made to overcome this "isolationism" and the tendency to localistic development. The Louisiana Worker, for example, writes: "We would like to see the beginnings of a nation-wide (and ultimately international) democratic revolutionary socialist movement. Such a movement, based on the ideas set forth here, would be a tremendous step forward. There is no such thing as socialism in one city or country. We need a close association with our fellow workers all over the world to support and assist each other, to share experiences and lessons of struggle, etc." (Louisiana Worker, Aug., 1975)

This statement is echoed with different emphasis by C.E. from Albuquerque in a letter

\*Revolutionary efforts towards the elaboration of theory and discussion can only take place on an international level. Thus we encourage our readers to read the International Review which is a theoretical magazine put out by our Current as a whole, with contributions from comrades of all the different national sections.



printed by Philadelphia Solidarity: "The need is there and the time is right for some sort of national libertarian socialist membership organization. It seems that many people are floundering around like us, unable to get to the next level of viable organization capable of effectively spreading libertarian ideas and taking part in working-class struggles, any struggles for that matter. (?) A national organization would certainly offer . . . an alternative to the stalinist/maoists that seem to dominate everywhere." (Solidarity Newsletter #11).

Many other examples could be cited including For Ourselves's ill-fated "international alliance." Essentially one point comes through clearly: the need for the regroupment of revolutionaries.

Unfortunately this is more often than not seen in terms of increasing the practical efficiency of intervention. Although this is an important aspect, it is by no means, in itself, a sufficient basis for regroupment. The emphasis must be placed on work towards political coherence. Intervention and organization can only be based on a clear political orientation. Efficiency can only be judged in terms of what you are trying to get across.

Confusion on this point is ultimately a reflection of confusion about the reason why revolutionary groups exist in the working class movement. The task of revolutionaries is to contribute to class consciousness, to generalize understanding of the historical goals of the working-class struggle. All through the history of the workers' movement, revolutionary organizations have developed because of the real need within the class to make ever more explicit the lessons of the experience of class struggle itself. In this sense, we can quote a text from the early years of the workers' movement: "The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1) In the national struggles of the proletarians of different countries they point out and bring to the forefront the common interests of the entire proletariat independently of all nationality. 2) In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole." (Communist Manifesto). The task of revolutionaries is thus to develop a clear understanding of "the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement." (Communist Manifesto)

Taken in relation to this responsibility, the question of where and how revolutionaries regroup in an organization becomes a pre-eminently political question and not an administrative or simple "numbers" question. Political coherence is a totality which guides all activities of revolutionaries within the class.

What can we think for example of the comments of H.S. in the Tennessee Valley Socialist about the Socialist Party: "The SP is actually a conglomerate of political minorities--I'm actually in a small minority myself, the anarchist sector . . . One thing, you'll never find as loose an organization to stay in. . . . I reject both the Social Democratic and Leninist solutions, except

that I feel more sympathetic to the Social Democratic types for their appreciation for elementary civil liberties, even if only limited to the bourgeois sort."

Ever since the Second International collaborated in the imperialist war effort of 1914, thereby crossing the class line, revolutionaries have insisted upon the need to break with the politics and organization of Social-Democracy. This was the political pre-condition for any further revolutionary work. Fifty years of experience, including the second imperialist world war, has only confirmed the fact that the SP's talk of "democratic socialism" is simply a cover for bourgeois ideology and outright collaboration with American imperialism. There is no choice between "Leninism and social democracy," between the Democrats and the Republicans, between any parties of the bourgeoisie as the "lesser evil." Any so-called revolutionary work in a bourgeois organization only serves as a whitewash and an aid for the mystification of the working class. The fact that the SP allows "democratic expression" within it simply shows that they are sophisticated enough to know how to keep up the "democratic" illusion in the interests of capital. It is quite understandable that the idea of "using" the SP should have led some of the ex-TVS members to ask why not "use" the Democratic Party! Others seemed to have decided that the Trotskyist "solution" was the best one to "use." But it is not simply they themselves who are being "used" as individuals but that any revolutionary content whatsoever in what they wanted to fight for is completely vitiated--and becomes a justification for a party of capital against the proletarian struggle.

This question of "using" the SP as an organization to regroup "revolutionaries" is unfortunately not so different from the attempt to use the New American Movement (or other variations on the same theme) as a way to "organize" or "gain contacts." The virus of frontism in all its varieties has by no means been understood by many who claim to be revolutionaries, particularly in the U.S. The NAM as a "tactic" for the formation of a "left-wing" is essentially the same as the Trotskyist tactic of entry-ism in bourgeois organizations. In another context, it is the old SDS refurbished for a New America--for "debates" between Maoists, Trotskyists and . . . others, as though the class line that separates a revolutionary perspective from state capitalism is simply a question of "detail" in the happy family of the left. A political coherence must express itself in all activities, including the very way revolutionaries organize in groups within the class struggle.

Frontism can take many forms including "anti-Stalinist" or "anti-Leninist" amalgamations, as well as the simple numbers game. The entire left-communist movement left the degenerating Third International essentially on this point of the so-called "tactic" of frontism. Instead of learning from the past, our "revolutionaries" are reliving it in fact or in theory because the very notion of political principles and coherence, the very meaning of revolutionary tasks, has not been assimilated.

"Frontism" is further aided by the



burgeoning anarchist-libertarian spirit in the sense that putting emphasis on forms--"democratic expression"--in the abstract leads people to assume that there is a class difference between the "democratic" instruments of capital and the non-"democratic" ones. But "democracy" is not a criterion in itself. The criterion is the class line, the class interests defended. In this sense, of course, the only democracy is in the proletariat since for the bourgeoisie "democracy" is merely a cover for the reality of class exploitation. A proletarian organization must be democratic in order to fulfill its role as a contributing factor in the development of class consciousness; but this democracy is based on and is an expression of, a coherent framework for the defense of the line of march, conditions and ultimate goals of the proletarian movement.

The rush to "do something," the activist mentality which has characterized and still characterizes so much of the American Left even affects those who are trying to break from "leftism." Activism can very often obscure the real political meaning of front organizations because these organizations provide the illusion that on the basis of agreement on 2 or 3 issues, "revolutionaries" can "get together." It is even better if the front organization leaves people alone to do whatever they want in localistic isolation!

The only major point that the text we are printing here should serve to illustrate is that revolutionary organizations are not just thrown together for the occasion but are an expression of the need and the effort towards the fullest possible political coherence.

If activism is to be condemned insofar as it considers intervention as a thing in itself and not as part of a coherent whole, its opposite side of the coin, the academic study-group approach is surely no answer either. Because of the long years of counter-revolution, there is an objective lack of information about the left-communist movement of the past and even about revolutionary efforts today in the U.S. and in other countries. But a study group or discussion circle can only be a transition to commitment. A study group as such cannot fulfill the need within the class for the development of a revolutionary program and therefore intervention in the class struggle.

Organized revolutionary activity is not simply the sum of different individual contributions: it is by definition a collective effort of responsibility within the class struggle (and not just any struggle). The last gasps of situationism, which seem to find a fertile field in the U.S. five years late, only encourage the already existing sentiment that the goal of revolutionary activity is to rid yourself of a sense of personal alienation. The group therapy-political approach begins with "me" and works outward to the rest of the world. Essentially this is simply another variety of the idea that society can change only if "individuals" change--if the individual can be "educated" or psychologically attuned to communism. After all, how can we believe in the struggle for a class-less society when the "average

man" still harbors all these neuroses and character-armor which Reichian analysis will supposedly free us of?

But alienation as a social reality will only be eliminated by eliminating its material basis: class society based on exploitation. The only class which can do this is the proletariat and thus the question becomes not one of searching for the psychoanalysts' utopia in the "irrational in politics", but a question of the development of proletarian class consciousness through the class struggle as a whole. The role of revolutionaries is not to gloss over the typical isolated "individual" of bourgeois ideology with a veneer of de-alienated revolutionary-ness, but to contribute to the collective effort of a revolutionary perspective. In general, efforts to build an organization based on the possibilities of de-alienating individuals and slapdash, eclectic politics are doomed to sterility in practice.

Over the years our Current has tried to show how and why marxism is the only coherent basis for the understanding of class struggle. We have tried to demonstrate in our work that marxism is not Stalinism, its tail-end, Trotskyism, or Maoism or any other ideology of state capitalism. The years of reaction have done a great deal to obscure this fact and, in the U.S., where the revolutionary marxist left had a very short-lived and ephemeral existence, there is a tendency today to try to go back to the revolutionary experience of the IWW, for example. But there is no turning back the clock. The admiration (which does not usually include an historical understanding) for anarcho-syndicalism in the past has too often merely served to confuse the question of organization both in relation to the meaning of workers' councils and the need for the organization of revolutionaries around clear political principles. Furthermore, the tradition of the IWW and its class positions has nothing to do with the "libertarian-modernism" so popular today.

"Anarchism" in general or "libertarianism" is presented as a convenient niche for those who see no alternative to "Leninist" politics. This is true in Europe as well as the U.S. Our Current's new section in Belgium was constituted by elements originally coming from anarchism (Journal des Luttes de Classe, Revolutionaire Raden Socialisten, Vrijen Raden Socialisten) who have learned from their own experience the futility of anarchist federalism and lack of political clarity.

On the question of organization, therefore, the following text represents an effort to show why the organization of revolutionaries must be seen in a political way, as an aspect of revolutionary activity that has its roots, its very reason for being, in the elaboration of a clear revolutionary perspective. The need for the regroupment of revolutionaries in an international situation of economic crisis and social turmoil is indeed great in the U.S. (as elsewhere) but the only road to regroupment and an end to localistic isolation is through a deeper political understanding--a real effort, for example, to analyze and eliminate all traces of third worldist ideology among those who are trying to break from "leftism." The



effort must be towards more political discussion and communication, towards the confrontation of ideas which alone can create the basis for a political regroupment of revolutionary forces.

Judith Allen

## I

### The Organization of the Class

1) All human activity is organized. With all the more reason, any social struggle, in order to be effective, is forced to take an organized form. For any stratum or class struggling against the social order of its time, organization is therefore a necessity--at the same time a result of and an active factor in its struggle.

2) This was already true for slaves or the peasantry, but it is even more the case for historical classes; those classes which have the task of establishing a new type of society, those classes whose struggle provides a solution to the contradictions of the old social order.

3) All the classes which have played a revolutionary role in history have established their economic power within the old society. This power served as a basis for and a guarantee of their triumph over the old dominant classes.

Unlike these previous classes, the proletariat is the only class called upon to take over the whole of society which does not dispose of any economic basis of power within this society, as a prelude to its future domination. The only material strength that the proletariat has is its organization. This is why organization constitutes for the proletariat, still more than for other classes, a decisive and fundamental condition for its struggle. Its capacity for self-organization is the measure of its passage from a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself, from a simple economic category within capitalist production into a historical class.

4) The type of organization that the working class creates in the course of history is necessarily linked to the different stages that capitalism itself goes through, and varies according to the objectives that these stages give birth to and impose on the struggle of the proletariat.

To the ascendant capitalism of the last century, which still had a progressive role to play, the proletariat could only oppose a struggle for reforms which attempted to resist in the best way possible the capitalist exploitation to which it was subjected.

With the entrance of capitalism into its phase of decadence, the conditions and the objectives of proletarian struggle greatly changed. Henceforth it was no longer possible for the proletariat to extract any reform whatsoever, to affirm itself as a class within capitalist society, and as a result the trade union form of organization became unutilizable and was transformed into an instrument of control in the service of capital. What is now the order of the day for the proletariat is on the other hand the necessity to destroy this society and to establish a classless society.

For this task, the organization of a

part of the class, as with unions in the past, is no longer sufficient. It is the whole of the proletariat which alone can undertake the revolutionary transformation of society. The type of organization that it creates must therefore incorporate all of the workers just as it must unify immediate struggles and the historical struggle, partial struggles and the global struggle for power, the legislative with the executive, the making of decisions and the application of these decisions. This organization is that of the Workers Councils, the form "finally found"--as Lenin said--of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

5) The working class is a world class. It is only on the scale of the entire world that it can accomplish its historical task. In this sense, the organization that it creates for its revolutionary struggle, even if it does not extend at the outset to the whole world, tends to be unified on a world basis and therefore be centralized at this level. Contrary to the assertions of the anarchists, the Workers Councils are not therefore federalist organs for self-management, but the centralizing organization of proletarian political power.

## II

### Class Consciousness

6) Every individual or social being tends to become conscious of its existence and activity. This is particularly true of social classes whose struggles against other classes are accompanied, on each side, by an awareness of their class interests, of the means and the goals of these struggles.

7) Even classes which were not the bearers of social progress had a form of consciousness, however alienated it was. This is even more the case with historical classes, on whom rests the burden of undertaking the new organization of society.

8) What is true for organization is true also for consciousness, and in this sense: consciousness is for the proletariat a decisive condition for its struggle, and even more important still than for other revolutionary classes of the past.

The fact that, on the one hand, any false step by the proletariat is immediately transformed into a disastrous defeat, and on the other hand, that the society that it must build is the first society that emancipates man from the blind laws and shackles of the economy, which establishes "the kingdom of liberty" in place of the "kingdom of necessity," in effect imposes on the proletariat the CLEAREST and most DEMYSTIFIED consciousness possible.

9) Proletarian consciousness must therefore apprehend reality with a minimum of distortions and is the first which can effectively do so.

In effect, the revolutionary classes of the past struggled for a social order which was progressive with respect to the preceding order, but one which nonetheless required a new exploitation. The consciousness that these classes could acquire in the course of their struggle could only be mystified since it had to be able to justify and to mask this exploitation.



The proletarian struggle, however, does not establish a new exploitation, but, on the contrary, liberates all of society from exploitation. In this sense, the class consciousness of the proletariat is the first which can be free of mystifications and distortions; the only class consciousness which can apprehend social reality in a truly scientific way.

10) It is for all these different reasons that proletarian consciousness--the product of the classes' struggle and its organization--does not remain, like bourgeois consciousness, essentially a reflection of this latter; but becomes an active factor, a powerful lever of this struggle and this organization. Its basic function is not to interpret the world but, having become a material force of the class, to actively participate in its transformation.

### III

#### The Development of Class Consciousness

11) The process by which working class consciousness develops is neither simultaneous nor homogeneous. It clears a tortuous way for itself through its struggles, its successes and its defeats. It must confront the sectorial and national divisions and differences which constitute the "natural" framework of society, and which capitalism has an interest in maintaining within the class.

12) Revolutionaries are the elements of the class which, through this heterogeneous process, are the first to raise themselves to a clear understanding of the "line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement" (Communist Manifesto). In capitalist society where the "dominant ideas are the ideas of the dominant class" (Marx), revolutionaries can only be a minority of the class.

13) It is not these elements, however, which make the class revolutionary. It is its specific position at the heart of the capitalist process of production which makes the proletariat the class capable of historically resolving the contradictions of capitalism and of establishing communism. In this sense, revolutionaries exist because a class with a revolutionary future exists and not the other way around.

14) Secretions of the class, an expression of the process by which its consciousness develops, revolutionaries can only exist as such by becoming an active factor in this process. In order to fulfill this task:

- they participate in all the struggles of the class and distinguish themselves by being the most determined and combative elements in these struggles;
- they intervene by always putting forward the general interests of the class and the final goals of the movement;
- for this intervention and as an integral part of it, they continually devote themselves to the work of theoretical reflection and elaboration, a work which alone permits their general activity to be based on the whole past experience of the class and on its future course.

### IV

#### Class and the Organization of Revolutionaries

15) Just like the class of which it is a part, the revolutionary minority organizes in order to accomplish the task for which it has historically appeared. In that, the activity of revolutionaries is subject to the rules which affect any human activity whatsoever, and the simple criterion of efficacy already imposes a collective character on the tasks of the elaboration and dissemination of theory, as well as on intervention in struggles. But the collective character of the activity of revolutionaries is further accentuated by:

- the conditions of existence and struggle of the proletariat which make it the associated class par excellence;
- the nature of the society to be constructed: Communism.

16) Throughout its existence, the working class has considered the organization of its revolutionary elements as one of its most precious instruments. Resistance or opposition to the organization of revolutionaries has always been the expression of a confusion in the class or of petty-bourgeois influences produced by its most recently proletarianized elements.

17) If the general organization of the class and the organization of revolutionaries are part of the same movement, they are nonetheless two fundamentally different things.

The first, the Council organizations, incorporate the whole of the class: the only criterion for belonging is to be a worker.

The second, however, only incorporates the revolutionary elements of the class. The criterion of belonging is no longer sociological but political: agreement on the program and the commitment to defend it. In this sense, individuals can be part of the vanguard of the class who are not sociologically part of the class, but who breaking with their class origins, make the historical interests of the proletariat their own.

18) If the class and the organization of its vanguard are two very different things, they are not because of this fact separate, each alien from the other or even opposed, as the "Leninist" and the council-workerist tendencies each pretend.

For the former, class and revolutionaries are two separate categories. The class struggle and the principles that revolutionaries profess "arise from different premises." For them, it is therefore a question of "introducing consciousness from outside," "of going to the masses," and of "winning their ear."

The latter begin from the same false conception, but conclude that any organization other than the Councils has goals necessarily opposed to those of the class and that consequently revolutionaries must not try to organize apart from the Councils.

What these two conceptions seek to ignore is that far from confronting or opposing one another, these two elements--class and revolutionaries--are in fact complementary, in a relation of the whole and a part of the whole. Between the two there can never exist relations of force



since communists "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole" (Communist Manifesto).

19) As a part of the class, revolutionaries can at no time substitute themselves for the class, neither in its struggles within capitalism nor still less in the overthrow of capitalism or in the exercise of power. This type of substitution is possible in the struggle of the bourgeoisie because the society that it establishes is a new exploitative, oppressive society, which is hierarchically divided. The exercise of power by a minority of the dominant class only gives expression to the power of a minority class over the great majority of society.

This substitution is even necessary for the bourgeoisie because in a society based on the extreme division of labor and function, only a minority of political specialists is in a position to have a sufficiently conscious view of the bourgeoisie's general interests and to assume the function of leadership with respect to the contradictory interests of its several factions.

This is not at all the case for the proletariat. The type of society that it is called on to establish, as well as the way to reach this goal, is radically different. On the one hand, no contradictory interests exist for the proletariat, and on the other hand, for the task that it must carry out the consciousness of a minority, however clear it may be, is not sufficient. This task continually requires the constant participation and the creative activity of all members, and of the class as a whole.

Generalized consciousness is the sole guarantee of the victory of the revolution, and as it is essentially the result of practical experience, the activity of the whole of the class is irreplaceable.

In particular, the use that the class must necessarily make of violence cannot be done by a minority separate from the general movement of the class or by individuals. In this sense, terrorism, by individuals or by isolated groups, is absolutely foreign to the methods of the class and constitutes at best a manifestation of petty-bourgeois despair, where it is not simply a cynical method of struggle between factions of the bourgeoisie.

The self-organization of the class struggle and the exercise of power by the class as a whole is not just one road to communism which can be balanced out against others--IT IS THE ONLY ROAD.

20) The tendencies which today identify the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the party, which speak of the seizure of power by the class under the control or the dictatorship of the party, whose conceptions therefore give precedence to the role of the revolutionary minority with respect to the whole of the class, tend to diminish the confidence of the class in itself and as a result to impede the road to its self-emancipation.

These tendencies situate themselves resolutely in the camp of social conservatism, of the counter-revolution, and the socialism that they pretend to construct only leads in the final analysis to state capitalism.

On the other hand, the tendencies which

deny any need for organization and intervention by revolutionaries--beyond the fact that they are opposed to a spontaneous process in the name of "spontaneity"--condemn themselves to non-existence and therefore to becoming agents of a withering of class consciousness by depriving the class of one of its fundamental instruments.

21) These workerist and anarchist tendencies make themselves the apostles of the "autonomy of the working class." But with them, this idea acquires a totally reactionary and petty-bourgeois meaning. Their conception has two principal aspects:

- the autonomy of the workers with respect to parties and political organization of any sort;
- the autonomy of each faction of the working class (factories, neighborhoods, regions, nations, etc.) with respect to others: federalism.

Today, such ideas are in the best of cases an elementary reaction against Stalinist bureaucratism and the development of state totalitarianism, and in the worst case the political expression of the isolation and division typical of the petty-bourgeoisie. But in both cases we see a total incomprehension of three fundamental aspects of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat:

- the importance and the priority of the political tasks of the class (destruction of the capitalist state, world dictatorship of the proletariat);
- the importance and the indispensable character of the organization of revolutionaries within the class;
- the unitary, centralized and world character of the revolutionary struggle of the class.

For us, as marxists, the autonomy of the class means its independence with respect to the other classes in society. This autonomy constitutes an INDISPENSABLE CONDITION for the revolutionary activity of the class inasmuch as the proletariat is today the only revolutionary class. This autonomy manifests itself both on the organizational plane (organization of Councils) and on the political plane and therefore, contrary to what the workerist tendencies think, in close connection with its communist vanguard.

22) The workerist tendencies base their arguments on the fact that the existence of a revolutionary minority expresses, in a certain way, the situation prevailing in bourgeois society where politics is the affair of specialists.

It is not a question--as the Leninist tendencies do--of denying the existence of this contradiction nor of making a virtue of necessity, but of understanding the great difference which exists between bourgeois political organizations and proletarian political organizations. While the former have the task of perpetuating their specific role and their power, the latter--like the proletariat which only affirms itself so as to be able to negate itself--can have no other goal than their own disappearance, since they work for the elimination of the very conditions which have given rise to them: the heterogeneity of proletarian consciousness.

The fundamental task of revolutionaries



is therefore to do everything so that their existence as such becomes pointless. But this specific task can only be completed within the framework of communist society, when classes will have disappeared and when the material conditions permitting a complete consciousness for all of humanity will have been created. Contrary to what certain varieties of councilists assert, the task of revolutionaries is not therefore completed with the seizure of power by the proletariat but continues until the disappearance of classes, until communism.

23) If the general organization of the class and revolutionary organizations are two different things with respect to their function, they are also different with respect to the circumstances in which they appear. Councils only appear in periods of revolutionary confrontation, when all the struggles of the class tend towards the seizure of power.

On the other hand, the effort towards class consciousness has always existed since the very beginnings of the class and will continue until its disappearance in communist society. It is in this sense that revolutionary minorities have existed in all periods as an expression of this constant effort. But the scope, the influence, the type of activity and the mode of organization of these minorities are closely linked to the condition of class struggle.

In periods of intense and generalized activity by the class, these minorities have a direct influence on the practical course of this activity. One can then speak of a party in order to designate the organization of this vanguard. On the other hand, in periods of retreat and down swing of the class struggle revolutionaries no longer have a direct influence on the immediate course of history. In these circumstances only organizations much reduced in size, whose function would no longer be to influence the immediate movement, but to resist it, could still exist; but these conditions would lead such organizations to become cut off from a class which was paralyzed and dragged by the bourgeoisie onto its terrain (class collaboration, "sacred union," "resistance," "anti-fascism," etc.). Their essential task would then consist in drawing the lessons of the past experiences, so as to prepare the theoretical and programmatic framework for the future proletarian party which must necessarily arise in the next upsurge of the class. Those groups and factions which at the moment of the ebb of the struggle have disentangled themselves from the degenerating party or have survived it, have the role of constituting the political and organizational bridge until the struggle again erupts.

## V

### The Mode of Revolutionary Organization

24) The working class creates a party in its own image, that is to say a world wide and centralized party, and the factions and groups which pave the way for this party necessarily tend towards world wide centralization. The rejection of centralization in the workers' movement has always been the

mark of vestiges of petty-bourgeois ideology and habits which generate federalism and the national and local particularism of the small shopkeeper guarding his own corner.

This centralization of the revolutionary organization is not "abstract" or "immaterial" as certain crypto-councilist tendencies pretend; it takes concrete form through the existence of central organs invested with political responsibilities between each of the congresses to which they are responsible.

25) Although based on a precise and coherent program, the revolutionary organization is not monolithic. Divergences appear within it as a reflection of the immaturity of a situation or of class consciousness. Whether these divergences are resolved or lead to organizational separation, they must be fully discussed both within the organization as well as publicly, with the whole of the class.

Because these divergences are problems that the class must resolve, organizational measures can never be substituted for this thorough discussion in order to regulate disagreements.

26) If it is not monolithic, the revolutionary organization nonetheless constitutes a unity. In this sense, when discussions of divergences have not yet led to one of the two acceptable outcomes (disappearance of the divergences or separation with the greatest possible clarity) the majority position constitutes the position of the organization. In no case must these divergences lead to a weakening of the organization; on the contrary, they necessarily lead to its strengthening so that it can better accomplish the tasks for which it has historically arisen.

Similarly, any disagreement between the whole and a part of the whole can only be resolved by the pre-eminence of the whole or of the central organ which is its expression. And what is true for any part of the organization is equally true for the militants. In other words, the militants are only component parts of the organization which is itself an organ for the defense of the revolutionary program of its class. Any modification in this relationship opens the way to opportunism (the program in the service of the organization) and to careerism (the organization in the service of individuals).

27) The relations which exist between the different parts and different militants of the organization necessarily bear the stigmata of capitalist society, and therefore, contrary to what certain neo-utopian tendencies pretend, cannot constitute an island of communist relations within capitalism. Nevertheless, they cannot be in flagrant contradiction with the goal pursued by revolutionaries. In this sense, the revolutionary organization must turn its back on any coercive relations, hierarchical division of labor and defense of particular interests.

Revolutionary organizations are necessarily based on a solidarity and mutual confidence which are one of the marks of belonging to the organization of the class which is the bearer of Communism.



# Marxism vs. Anarchism

We are publishing below part of a letter sent to a sympathizer in Canada, with whom we have been in contact for over a year. Through correspondence with him we have been involved in answering his questions on points of our platform. Internationalism is committed to furthering and encouraging a sustained and active political correspondence with its readers and sympathizers. We welcome criticisms and comments on our articles and on our political perspectives, as this constitutes an essential moment in the clarification of ideas which is so necessary for a revolutionary workers' movement. Since our programmatic relation to anarchism, and in particular to anarcho-syndicalism, has been brought up before by contacts, we are taking this opportunity to share with you our response on this important question of the history, role and present class nature of anarchism.

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The questions that you raise about the role of anarchism are very important. It is worth noting that many members of our Current also came from an anarchist background. Thus what is today the Dijon section of Revolution Internationale originally split from the anarchist OCL (Organization Communiste Libertaire) and after a process of discussion and meetings joined R.I. Similarly the Belgian group Journal des Luttes de Classe broke from the ORA (Organization Revolutionnaire Anarchiste) and after a process of evolution, to which our comrades actively contributed through correspondence and meetings, has come to the marxist positions of the International Communist Current (ICC). In both cases what these comrades came to appreciate was that Marxism, while it has not been the only theoretical expression of the workers' movement--anarchism at its inception was indisputably an expression of the workers' movement--is its most coherent expression.

Marxism was not the only theory which expressed and explained the movement of the working class. From its very beginnings, at the beginning of capitalism itself, the working class has made the effort to understand its class interests and to act upon them. In this framework of constant effort towards consciousness we can identify the contributions of Babeuf, of the secret societies in the early 19th century, Buonarrotti, then the Chartists, Weitling, the utopian socialists, Proudhon, Blanqui and anarchism, all of which were the expressions of an effort towards consciousness despite their errors and aberrations. The working class moved forward, going beyond these partial aspects, overcoming errors through experience. What we do say, however, is that marxism is the most coherent expression of the working class movement.

Marxism isn't a "finished" theory all written down once and for all; it's a constant elaboration and enrichment from the

experience of the class--up to and including today's efforts. Marxism is the method of historical materialism, the explanation of the economic laws which determine capitalist society and an analysis of the class struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat which will mean the emancipation of all humanity.

Although marxism wasn't created "en bloc," once its basic premises were established, it is within and from marxism that coherent revolutionary theory developed. This may seem like a gratuitous statement but 150 years of working class history verifies this statement, particularly in relation to anarchism.

Many people today who wish to become revolutionaries are so rightly revolted by Stalinism (and Trotskyism, Maoism, et al) that they seek a viable theory from vestiges of the past. They try to up-date anarchism because it seems to them that marxism is fatally tinged with authoritarianism just as Stalinism has so long sought to "prove" in order to justify itself. Even in the past, in reaction to the grave errors of the Second International and its slow decline into eventual betrayal, some revolutionaries sought to develop anarcho-syndicalism in opposition to what they saw as marxism--not the revolutionary marxism of Luxembour and the left but the debased "Marxism" of Bernstein and later Kautsky. Although some of these militants as individuals made real contributions to the revolutionary movement and although some rallied to the Russian revolution and marxist organisations in the heat of struggle, the theory of anarchism as a body of ideas is, and was, incoherent and therefore dangerous.

What in anarchism was a lack of coherence, an inability to grasp the laws of motion of capitalist society, to understand the insoluble contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, a moralistic approach to the state and a coming to class positions on the basis of class instinct rather than a scientific theory, had in the face of marxism's coherence and the development of capital towards its stage of decline become a definite barrier to the development of class consciousness. With the change of historical period inaugurated by World War I, the anarchist organizations, like the rest of the old workers' movement, passed into the camp of the bourgeoisie. The history of this passage from a youthful expression of the revolutionary strivings of the proletariat to an arm of the bourgeoisie within the workers' movement can be briefly sketched as follows.

In the first International, anarchism had its roots in the areas where the working class was the least separated from artisan leftovers. It grew among the most recently proletarianized sections of the petty bourgeoisie rather than among the industrial proletariat. The debates between anarchists and marxists in the 1st International centered on the question of federalism/centralism and the nature of political work. The anarchists at the time were not of course against organization as



such but they stood for federalism--every section of the International according to their logic, should have had the right to decide its own rules. The anarchist sections were quasi-secret societies with rules and principles that were not open to debate by other comrades elsewhere in the organization. The marxists stood for the unitary nature of proletarian organization, for the fact that the organization must be guided by a platform and program openly decided upon which would be the same for all sections. Conspiratorial tactics do not lead to democracy they maintained but to bureaucracy. The marxists felt that the International needed a centralized, coherent structure to maintain and develop political clarity and that the General Council, which was elected by the entire organization, had to take precedence over local particularities and tendencies. Just as marxists had fought the "federalism" of Proudhon's idea of separate little worker cooperatives, they fought the localistic, "everyone in his own corner" attitude of anarchism on the question of organization.

The anarchists and marxists were also divided by the question of political activity. The anarchists claimed that political work, building political parties, working for suffrage, etc. were deviations of class struggle which they could see only on an economic level. They had no analysis of the objective historical limits of their period of capitalist development and so rejected much of the necessary political preparation of that period. Their political positions were no more than moral stances--like their analysis of the state which they saw as an ahistorical, abstract embodiment of evil with no explanation of its genesis.

Although anarchism was definitely part of the workers' movement at this time, it represented an immaturity of consciousness, an insufficient grasp of the needs of class struggle. Despite some of the more petty aspects of the debates in the 1st International, it seems clear from our reading of them that anarchism had no coherent approach to organization and political activity. Although many anarchists adhered to Marx's theories on the economic laws of capitalism, anarchism itself was, in this domain, no more than well-intentioned voluntarism with little grasp of the mechanism of historical change and of the dynamics of capitalist society. Unfortunately, errors in the proletarian movement are not gratuitous for anyone and anarchism with its abstraction of anti-authoritarianism and revolutionary "will" was destined to degenerate into dangerous paths. After the Paris Commune, anarchism was an anachronism in the workers' movement with a more than doubtful future as a body of incoherent ideas.

In the two or three decades preceding the first imperialist world war it was the left of the social democracy which elaborated a scientific theory of imperialism, which grasped the importance of the mass strike (the interconnection between political and economic mass strikes) and which recognized in the soviets, which appeared in Russia in 1905, the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is true that the emerging anarcho-syndicalist movement was often representative of the most militant workers on the

shop floor and that these syndicalist organizations (like the IWW) reflected the class' implacable hatred for capital, its will to struggle against the bourgeois order and its repudiation of the class collaboration which the dominant wing of the social democracy and the trade union movement came to reflect. Nonetheless, what guided these organizations was class instinct and not scientific theory--- and instinct is not enough for the proletariat. Together with organization, consciousness is the only weapon that the proletariat has in its death struggle with the bourgeoisie. In order to liberate itself and emancipate humanity from the blind laws of the economy the proletariat requires the clearest and most demystified consciousness. Because the proletariat does not establish a new exploitative society, with the necessity of hiding and distorting the nature of this exploitation (as did the bourgeoisie in its epoch), the proletariat is the first class in history which has the capacity to perceive social reality in a truly scientific way; moreover, this is a condition for the success of its struggle. It was marxism that was the most advanced expression of this process of development of consciousness within the proletariat.

With the outbreak of the imperialist world war in 1914 it was the marxists, the social democratic left (Luxemburg, Pannekoek, Gorter, Lenin, Trotsky, Bordiga) who took as their war cry "the enemy is in our own country" and "turn the imperialist war into a civil war." It was the marxists who saw that August 1914 had inaugurated the era of wars and revolutions and who saw the need to build a new Communist international. Certainly many anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists also defended the class line (Malatesta in Italy, Rosmer and Monatte in France, the IWW in the US, etc.). Yet it is important to remember three things.

- 1) It was class instinct and not scientific reasoning that led so many anarchists to take up the marxist slogan of "turn the imperialist war into a civil war."

- 2) The best of them (Rosmer and Monatte for example) worked for the formation of and joined the (marxist) Communist International.

- 3) By and large the anarchist movement was "defencist" not "defeatist" during the war--it was not Malatesta but Kropotkin, who surrendered to the nationalism and patriotism of the imperialist bourgeoisie, who was most representative of anarchism at this crucial moment in the life of the class. The behavior of anarchism in the face of imperialist world war was the clearest demonstration that class instinct cannot substitute for a scientific understanding of capitalism and of the dynamics of the class struggle which only marxism can provide.

At the height of the revolutionary wave which put an end to the war the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, despite their often heroic efforts at the side of their class, completely lacked any understanding of the most basic and vital necessities of the movement. In opposition to the marxists who saw the Russian revolution as only a moment in the world revolution, and who insisted that the strategy and tactics of the proletariat must be based on the necessity to extend the revolution



throughout the world, the Russian anarchists had a localistic view of the revolution, deciding on strategy and tactics based on the needs of each district and village. Against the marxists who recognized that socialism could not be built in Russia alone but only on a world scale, the Russian anarchists argued that socialism could be built in each local commune!

In Italy, where Bordiga and the marxists insisted on the necessity to destroy the bourgeois state, on the primacy of the political tasks of the revolution, the anarchists and the syndicalist inspired Ordine Nuovo group around Gramsci diverted the workers from an assault on the state and sought to confine them in the factories. However, because they did not smash the bourgeois state, the workers could never be masters in the factories. In Italy in 1920 the counter-revolutionary nature of self-management was already apparent. (For an analysis of Italy in 1920 see "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Italy" in Int. Review 2, which we will be sending out to you.)

That the incoherence of anarchism, its federalist orientation, its opposition to "politics", etc., would lead the anarchist organizations into the camp of the bourgeoisie was demonstrated with a vengeance during the years of counter-revolution which followed the revolutionary wave of 1917-1923. In Spain, the anarchist CNT participated in the republican government (!) which decapitated the workers' movement. The anarchists sowed counter-revolutionary illusions within the working class about the self-management of separate factories linked by market (i.e. capitalist) relations; and about collectivization while the bourgeois state was left intact, thus helping to guarantee that the bourgeoisie would smash the working class.

With the outbreak of the second imperialist world war the anarchist movement wrapped itself in the banner of antifascism and devoted itself to the cause of the allied imperialisms. By then even the class instinct, which had once characterized the anarchist militants, had given way to open class collaboration. This was the price of anarchism's theoretical incoherence which, while always a serious weakness, had in the era of imperialist war and revolution become fatal and which permitted the bourgeoisie to utilize anarchist ideology and organizations as a weapon against the working class.

In the post-war era the descendants of Monatte and Rosmer, hiding their reactionary ideas under the title "Revolution Proletarienne" gave their support to American imperialism against Russian imperialism (just as during the war they had supported Anglo-American imperialism and De Gaulle against the Germans). For these anarcho-syndicalists the cause of proletarian revolution now demanded the support of the Americans in what seemed like an imminent 3rd world war; and while Rosmer and Monatte had called for turning the imperialist world war into a civil war in 1915, their descendants vainly called for transforming the local war into a world war in order to halt Russian imperialism in Korea (1950). Today, it is worth noting, a number of these once partisans of American imperialism around the review "Revolution Proletarienne" have discovered a new

imperialism to defend--Chinese imperialism!

On practically all of the issues which the lessons of the past 60 years have clearly marked as a line between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat--parliamentarism, unions, nationalism, frontism, anti-fascism, etc.--the anarchist organizations today take an unequivocal stand with the bourgeoisie. The subjective will of many anarchist militants to struggle against capital can only be translated into effective practice by breaking with anarchism and by recognizing that today marxism (not Marxism-Leninism, that abomination of the counter-revolution) is the only theoretical expression of the proletariat and that revolutionary activity is inseparable from marxist theory. (Perhaps the greatest success of the bourgeoisie in the ideological arena has been in practically eradicating any trace of the enormous theoretical contributions of the left communists, both at the height of the revolutionary wave and in the depths of the counter-revolution. One of the tasks of our International Review will be the publication of texts of the left communists.

## INTERNATIONALISM



# After The "Fall":

## The Redeployment Of American Imperialism

Six months have passed since the US pulled out of South Vietnam and Cambodia. These six months have been busy times for all players in this drama: six months of government blather about healing national wounds, about an end to recriminations; six months for assorted flavors of "leftists" to crow about mighty peasant armies defeating the U.S. imperialist army; six months for the "radical" intelligentsia to moan about America's lost innocence and to project an almost fatalistic vision of recurring military adventurism seen as the result of U.S. foreign policy characterized as stupid, savage or lawless.

If the U.S. government and its official organs want to avoid the nasty issue of American imperialism, this should surprise nobody but the most naive soul. Low profile must be maintained, then with better "advisors" or a clean cut President the government will attempt to pacify the disaffected liberals. They can hope that times will change and national chauvinism will recover its potency. But this is not to say that the government has not been very busy maintaining the vital interests of American imperialism. At the same time that some government factions have been investigating the "criminal" activities of the C.I.A., this same "embattled" organization has been carrying out its tasks in Angola, in Portugal, and elsewhere.

Although these activities are clear (or should be) to anyone who can read--most of my raw data on government activities comes straight from the New York Times or the Economist--the "leftists" and "radical" intelligentsia have been stunning in their inability to analyse these events coherently. What this conclusively shows is that everyone uses information selectively to illustrate their own viewpoint. But what is this world view that is being pushed?

A large portion of the August/September issue of Ramparts was devoted to drawing the lessons of Vietnam. One of the articles all but blames the U.S. defeat on the inabilities of U.S. officials to get the intonation of the Vietnamese language down and rejoices in the fact that: "the future of Vietnam is at last in the hands of people speaking the language of their own country." (1) No doubt it is better to be exploited by those speaking one's own language--in which case, what is their complaint with the U.S. government, it does speak English. In all but one of the articles the North Vietnamese regime is praised and called socialist.

The one exception to this is Noam Chomsky in his article entitled "The Remaking of history." In setting up the basic arguments for his article he states that:

American policy has been guided by the aim of preventing any region from extricating

itself from the U.S. dominated global system and thereby releasing its resources, human and material for development guided by internal needs. Whether the system is "fascist" or "communist" or "democratic" has been a question of little moment. The threat is "not" communism but a significant measure of independence (or still worse, dependence on an enemy). (2)

Chomsky goes on to say that the famous domino theory was not a false issue but based on the necessity to protect and maintain the power of the U.S. in the Pacific. He correctly sees the links between this policy and the motivation of the U.S. in fighting WWII with Japan: i.e. to prevent Japan from excluding the U.S. from control of Asia.

Although this article shows an awareness of the economic motivation of U.S. foreign policy this line of attack is not stressed. The major emphasis is on how the government through its "official" apologists, who used to be very aptly called "the running dogs of American Imperialism" will try to "recuperate" the situation. He sees the U.S. defeat as being "stunning" but not permanent with the government mobilizing against a "less resilient enemy, the American people." (3)

Chomsky attacks what he sees as dangerous backsliding by many previous critics of the war in Indochina. He sees as particularly dangerous the tendency to attack the war as merely stupid or savage. Characterizations which he describes as being politically neutral:

If American policy was stupid, as in retrospect all can see that it was, then the remedy is to find smarter policy makers; presumably, the critics. (4)

or

If the American leadership was sadistic, as it surely was, the remedy . . . is to find people who will pursue the same policies in a more humane fashion. (4)

Chomsky's solution is to add another category. The American record in Indochina can be captured in three words: lawlessness, savagery and stupidity--in that order. (4) (our emphasis)

What Chomsky fails to realize is that he has himself added another neutral category, for lawlessness implies some higher law than that of the nation state. Where does this come from and better yet who enforces this law? In reality Thucydides in "reporting" on the Melian dialogue understood the situation far better:

. . . the question of justice only enters where there is equal power to enforce it, and that the powerful exact what they can, and the weak grant what they must. (5)

If the world were indeed dependent on the



ability of the American intellectual community to analyse the lessons of the war it would be quite reasonable to be pessimistic about the future. The two great weaknesses of this article are not to see "lawlessness" as endemic and irremovably part of capitalism and not to state that the only alternative to this is an international revolution, destroying capitalism and with it imperialism, led by the only class capable of performing this herculean task: the INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS.

#### Imperialism, the other side of the capitalist coin

While the history of capitalism is full of the plunder and brutal exploitation of the weak by the strong, it is in the twentieth century that this sad tale has reached its heights. The twentieth century reveals a system which escapes stagnation only through massive destruction--thereby allowing periods of growth based on the reconstruction of war destroyed facilities. The dislocations which accompany these periods of war and reconstruction are constantly visible--millions dying of starvation, millions condemned to subsistence diets in the shanty towns of Africa, Asia and South America, millions chewed up each year as the cannon fodder of "wars of liberation."

Even before the economic crisis visibly bit the metropolises of capitalism the weaker, "third world" countries were floundering: the victims of the decadence of capitalism, which can only ravage economies but not further develop the forces of production. Whatever meager existence they enjoyed before being drawn into the world capitalist market had been destroyed; whatever small surplus they could produce is long gone and now "hooked" on the capitalist system many have further decimated their populations by turning land previously devoted to food crops to the production of cash crops in a desperate attempt to gain foreign currency. As the crisis has been deepening, this process had been accentuated--the stronger nations attempting as they always do, to throw the burden of the crisis onto the weaker nations.

The recent maneuver of the middle eastern oil sheikdoms to take a heavy bite of the global surplus value through their control over the most important twentieth century raw material, oil, has resulted in secondary imperialist countries like Japan coming to the verge of disaster. Even the Eastern bloc countries (who used to claim imperviousness to such problems) have exhibited inflation.

What has been the reaction to this perilous condition? The only possible reaction is the incessant jockeying for power and position between the major countries. While seeking to undermine each others economic base and control of critical areas the super powers talk of peace and detente.

At the same time as the official voice of the State Department (Kissinger) stresses: "the hopeful new trends in U.S.-Soviet relations on the basis of realism and reciprocity," a document originating from the Defense Intelligence Agency (Pentagon) emphasizes the flimsiness of the detente theory, saying that: "For the Soviets, detente is intended to

facilitate their attainment of ultimate, overall dominance over the West. . . ." and that: "Therefore, as long as the U.S.S.R. is committed to detente, the U.S. can step up its demands in negotiations with the Soviets and need not hesitate to demand a clearly comparable price for every concession." One must remember Brecht's short poem:

WHEN THE LEADERS SPEAK OF PEACE  
The common folk know  
that war is coming.

When the leaders curse war  
the mobilization order is already written out.

Just as the U.S. and Western Europe have begun to tolerate the presence of the Communist Party and even offer justification for including it in shaky governments such as Italy and project its usefulness in Spain, just at this minute Zorodov with at least nominal support from Brezhnev voiced the opinion in an article in Pravda that most of these CP's committed to interventions within the democratic framework were not militant enough and were lacking in revolutionary zeal. And so the "moderates" and "liberals" of both side maneuver for position, but the major jockeying for power continues. . . and with it the inevitable confrontations which in the near future will probably be contained to the so-called Third World, for example, Angola. To say otherwise is to assume a higher law, to assume that either camp subscribes to a law other than that of survival at any cost.

The necessity for growth in a highly competitive but contracted market has forced the abandonment of the myth of unaligned or neutral nations. The biggest neutralist of the fifties, India, has been forced to play the same game as all the others--to contend borders with China, to go to war with Pakistan over control of Kashmir and over the jute industry in Bangladesh. (6) The former neutralist then needed arms and had to go to one of the two major arms providers, the U.S. or U.S.S.R., and in exchange had to "mortgage" Indian production to pay for these armaments. The high cost of waste production like armaments, and the high cost of fuel only compounded India's problems--ending eventually in the "crisis of democracy." (7)

This drawing of countries into one camp or another, this imposed militarization, is not a new phenomenon. It has always been the name of the game--eat or be eaten. All of the now reigning capitalist powers are past winners, while the so-called third world nations are the losers of past centuries. It was in this way that Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries in its attempt to avoid being dominated by the more developed west built a huge army, brought in industry to support the army and because there was no avoiding it allowed the more advanced capitalism's to export capital into Russia. Japan was one of the most successful countries in condensing centuries of capitalist development into less than fifty years to emerge by 1905 as an important secondary imperialist power.

In this century only three countries have exhibited any remarkable achievements as imperialist superpowers: Russia, China and Japan. Of these only China had no previous standing in the "wolf" pack prior to the



Korean war. The success of China is due to a prior industrial base however small, to heavy Russian aid following World War II, but mostly to her tremendous size, abundant raw materials and ability to "use" her basic resource: her huge population. Although it is grossly inefficient and expensive to use labor intensive rather than capital intensive means to achieve growth--the present regime has attained noticeable strength in so doing.

But what have been the costs in China and in other countries following the Chinese model? The working class has been no beneficiary of this, anymore than elsewhere. In China as in North and South Vietnam, in Cambodia, in Mozambique, the working class is told to get to work; no strikes--and in return is appealed to in the name of patriotism and by the doctrine of "socialism": a national variety which offers the same old exploitation under different slogans. The true nature of the regimes are seen when in the face of working class resistance to austerity measures troops are brought in to break the resistance and to meet production requirements, as recently happened in Hangchow province in China. (And there are reports that these labor troubles are not confined to Hangchow.)

If another confirmation of the true nature of these regimes is required it is indicated by the recent spate of investments in the "Communist bloc." Recent articles in the NY Times have documented an agreement between General Motors and the Polish government for the construction of a plant to manufacture pick-up trucks for sale within Poland and for export elsewhere (but not to the U.S.) and recent investments by the OPEC nations in Eastern Europe. With the value of trade between the U.S. and Poland expected to be \$1 billion this year, other American companies such as Westinghouse are thinking about investing in companies. Singer already has a plant there, which manufactures machines for sale throughout the world including the U.S. Kuwait and Libya provided financing for a new 460 mile oil pipeline through Yugoslavia, Hungary and the U.S.S.R.. Iran is planning to build a paper mill in Poland and a large petrochemical complex in Rumania. (Only Saudi Arabia is listed as not being involved in these deals.) Why is there this seeming rush to invest behind the "Iron Curtain"?

An apparent reason for American business interest in Poland, informants say, is that Poland has the technological background to make high-quality American products. Moreover, it is reported able to do so at less cost than would be possible in the United States or Western Europe. Polish labor is cheap, the Government here is strong and stable, and Communist nations have an excellent record of adhering strictly to business agreements, Western businessmen say. (8) (our emphasis)

#### Vietnam: a stunning defeat?

The loss of Vietnam and Cambodia was indeed a defeat for the U.S., but it must be seen not as an isolated event but as part of a global situation. One battle lost does not mean a lost war.

Although Cambodia and South Vietnam have gotten rid of American troops, they have also

gotten rid of American investment credits. Both the "leftists" and the liberal press claim that these countries will try to avoid the strings attached to joining a new camp, but realistically this is not a long range alternative. Eventually they will need loans and fresh arms; and the game will continue since the only thing that they can supply in return is to be a market and a source of raw materials.

Already there is intense rivalry between Russia and China for control over southeast Asia and an attempt to parlay any weakness, real or imagined, of the U.S. into new alliances. The Russians have called for a conference in Asia to duplicate the recent European Security Conference in Helsinki. As the NY Times of Sept 14 saw it:

Soviet assurances notwithstanding, many Asian nations continue to fear a Soviet-initiated collective security system would be used against China. And they seem well aware that Peking has greeted the idea with hostility. . . . (9)

The wind-up of the war in Indochina has left the two Communist powers with less in common than ever. In the raw rivalry that is still unfolding, the signs so far suggest that the Soviet Union has not come out ahead. (9)

Although the Russians can count Mongolia, North Korea and India as "allies," her relations with North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are far from settled. In the immediate wake of the U.S. pull-out from Indochina there was a veritable rush of those old rabid anti-Communist regimes like Thailand and the Philippines, as well as Malaysia, to establish diplomatic relations with China. This could hardly have pleased the Russians.

Indeed the recent coup in Bangladesh with its accompanying murder of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman "might erase several years of Soviet investment in aid and technicians and open the young nation to Chinese influence." (9) This might also pose problems for India since Chinese influence would decrease her control over Bangladesh's jute. In addition, Bangladesh might again be used as a haven by the pro-Maoist Naxalites, who in recent years have been quiescent.

It is, however, premature to write the Russians out of the Indochina show, since Hanoi and the NLF are in no small measure dependent on the U.S.S.R. for military aid received during the war. Indeed, in Laos the Pathet Lao has been reported to be furious with the Americans for cutting off previously promised economic assistance. The U.S.S.R. having recognized this opportunity has brought in pilots, engineers and technicians to do "everything from flying Pathet Lao officers and cargo around this mountainous country to surveying for minerals and building a city of 200,000 on the devastated Plain of Jars." Fox Butterfield (NY Times reporter) sees: "The Soviet Union's build-up as part of an intense competition for influence in Laos between it and North Vietnam and China." (10) The North Vietnamese, who had lent both troops and material, to the Pathet Lao, are now building up troop concentrations on the Thai border. The interesting predicament in this for Laos is that most of her food supplies and even ship-



ments of oil from the Russians and the Chinese are trucked through Thailand. This situation is in some ways similar to Portugal, which is likewise dependent on Spain for transshipping, and poses for both countries the question of how fast and how belligerently they can change camps.

While the Asian see-saw continues to teeter, there have been significant changes in the balance in the middle-east, in Portugal and in Peru.

#### The middle east: or who controls the oil?

The balance of power in the middle east is tremendously vital to all capitalist nations with those such as Japan most affected by price policies in oil. In the recently held OPEC conference the infra-structure of the area was obvious--with Saudi Arabia (which pumps 1/3 of OPEC's oil) supporting a nominal increase and with Iraq pushing for more than a 10% increase. Even Iran was pushing for a large increase, since oil revenues have not, even with the price boosts, provided enough revenue for the ambitious plans of the Shah: thereby showing that nobody is immune to the effects of the crisis.

It is abundantly clear that the new focus of attention for the U.S. is in the middle east. In that part of the world the U.S. had lost a great deal of influence starting in the late fifties by not backing "Arab nationalism," and as a result losing Egypt, the Sudan, Syria and Iraq to Russian influence. As a result of this Russian influence the U.S. lost the ability to freely intervene both militarily & economically to dictate oil prices.

The Egyptians became increasingly disenchanted with their arrangements with the U.S.S.R., perhaps convinced that the capitalist on the other side of the fence will give better terms, but also and more importantly due to considerable pressure from the Egyptian working class (as indicated by the clashes between striking workers and the police in Mehalla last March) to improve the standard of living. Recognizing the need to obtain more favorable aid agreements, the Egyptians negotiated a new Sinai settlement with the Israelis under the auspices of the U.S., which will act as a guarantor of the pact. Along with the introduction of American technicians to help monitor the border, there came the promises of sizeable aid packages; \$650-800 million for Egypt and \$2.5 billion for Israel. This ushers in a new phase of American involvement in the middle east. As Secretary of State Kissinger told representatives of 19 Arab countries on Sept. 29, U.S. involvement in the middle east is "irrevocable" and "irreversible." He said that the U.S. has no interest in dividing the Arab bloc and that "Only a united Arab world can make a final peace." To be sure, especially if they are all united into the American orbit.

This rapid change of alliance on the part of Egypt will no doubt cause them trouble with Syria and Iraq, both of whom have tried to out "anti-Zionist" the other. President Assad of Syria in particular has built national unity on this shaky ground of saber rattling. All this is tempered by the fact that Egypt is one of the more industrialized of Arab nations and by the fact that "Egypt does have the support

of such financial powers as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iran. . . ." As the NY Times so matter-of-factly puts it, "The conservative Persian Gulf states, through subsidies to Syria, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians, also make their influence felt." (11) Or nothing talks like money. The waning of Russian influence in Egypt affects these "conservative Persian Gulf states" by removing Egypt as a supporter of "liberation struggles" within their borders.

The Russians have also moved into new areas and have gained influence in Libya, in Uganda (those former anti-Communists) and in Somalia. However the "loss" of Egypt is both a severe political and economic blow.

#### Portugal: Or which "leftists" do you back?

The current political situation in Portugal is providing the opportunity for all manner of bourgeois theorists to thump their favorite drums whether these be anti-fascism, misleadership of the Communist party or the beauties of bourgeois democratic government. Whatever capitalist faction they support all these individuals and groups are agreed on one thing: the restoration of order and discipline under their favored faction. And this restoration of order that they push offers only one thing to the Portuguese working class: shouldering the yoke of capitalism which will, as it must, make the class bear the burden of making Portuguese capital viable in the ambient of an international economic crisis. Since all factions realize the lack of attractiveness that this has for the working class they are impelled to find some issue or cause which can be used to distract the working class from its real interests and almost instinctively they all shout in unison: unite against the peril of fascism. This fascist peril, which miraculously can always be found lurking in the shadows--which regardless of the political hues of the conjuror--can be described as more terrible than capitalism.

A good illustration of this is provided in an article in the New York Times entitled "Lisbon and Chile: Diverse Paths" by Marvine Howe:

Political sectors repeatedly warn that the current instability could lead to a military take-over on the Chilean model. However, this seems unlikely because of the strong anti-fascist feelings in Portugal and above all, because of the disintegration of authority and power. As can be expected this article does not project the real underlying difference between Chile on the eve of the military coup and Portugal today: the state of the working class. In Chile, the working class had been disarmed both literally and theoretically by Allende and the Popular Unity government which paved the way for the right wing military coup of Pinochet. It was only after Allende had proved incapable of controlling his supposed constituency and of providing labor "tranquility," which is so necessary for national capital, that the right wing stepped in to offer its inevitably gruesome solution--dictatorship by naked force and violence. And as always the brunt of this intercapitalist feud is borne, not by the officials of the Popular Unity government, but by the Chilean working



class both with its blood and with the daily misery of its situation. Portugal today is still the scene of active class conflict, where the working class is militantly struggling even though severely hampered by the lack of revolutionary coherence. But even hindered in this way, it is too strong for a right wing solution.

In Portugal today the only viable parties are "leftist" because only the leftists have the possibility of diverting class struggle, of leading the working class back into the factories to "correct drops in production." Only the left can secure working class support in the effort to make Portugal an attractive place in which to do business. At this moment if a naked dictatorship were to prove necessary for Portuguese capital, it would be a left wing one. And let nobody rejoice as to this "victory" as opposed to the Chilean "solution," for a left dictatorship offers the working class the rhetoric of working class control, the fiction of socialism--while imposing the same austerity procedures and ultimately if these fail, it will resort to the same naked force.

While it is not surprising that the political analysts for the Times do not see this--the U.S. government has recognized this fact of life by having the CIA funnel money to the Portuguese Socialist Party through West European Socialist parties and labor unions. (In an indignant rejoinder to the report on "funneling," the head of the Socialist International denied that the western European Socialist parties had acted as a conduit for the funds and said that in printing such outrageous lies the NY Times was hurting the cause of Socialism in Portugal.)

Although nobody would deny that the issue is not settled, the current choice for the major powers is which leftists to back. The Soviet Union obviously backs the Communist Party; and now it is obvious that the U.S. and the EEC back the Socialist Party.

The establishment of the new Coalition government, the sixth try, was countered by demonstrations by the extreme leftists and by dissent within the AFM as the so-called moderates tried to rout out Goncalves' old supporters. As the Economist (Oct. 11) surveyed the situation:

The rallies organized by the radical soldiers' groups this week almost make it look like what started out as a captains' coup has now turned into a sergeants'--or even a privates'-revolution. It has not gone as far as that; but there is hardly a unit in the Portuguese armed forces at the moment that can be counted on to obey orders, whatever the orders happen to be. (12) But the question remained as to whether the troops would not obey the 6th Cabinet's orders but would obey those of so-called leftist officers.

What originally had the appearance of "rank and file," autonomous struggles within the army has now sprung full-blown into an intense factional dispute for control over the military forces. What may have originally looked like revolutionary potential is now quite the reverse--so that any comparison with the events in and after February of 1917 in Russia can be stated this way: in Russia in

1917 the soldiers and sailors joined the workers, in Portugal in 1975 the call of the military is for the workers to join with the armed forces. And the difference is that of a revolution on the one hand and a coup on the other.

The current struggle for control of the military has all but undermined the authority of the new Coalition government. Even though ultimate power in all six Cabinets has resided with the AFM, the changes of Cabinet have reflected the enormous social and economic pressures involved in reorganizing Portuguese capitalism. After the Communist Party through its support of Goncalves was unsuccessful in performing this task, the new "democratic" cabinet was formed. But the Socialist Party despite its "popular" support has been unable so far to provide a "screen" for the establishment of order, i.e. control over the working class. The Communist Party and the extreme left on the other hand have nothing to gain in supporting the current government, especially since they realize that another election will diminish their standing in the electoral politics charade, and have therefore doubled their efforts to obtain control of the government through control over the armed forces.

The turmoil within the military has driven the "moderates" like General Fabiao to get on TV to appeal for the restoration of military discipline and coherence, and to warn that the military in its current state might be unable to deter a right wing coup. Although the actual probability of a right wing coup at this time is small, the old siren call of anti-fascism has worked before in unifying the factions of the bourgeoisie, in particular in getting the leftists to use their influence within the working class to divert the class from its real interests. (13) The only issue which concerns Fabiao, Azevedo et al is the establishment of a secure durable government. And the durability of the government will inevitably rest on its ability to restore discipline in the armed forces and to force or convince the working class to fall in line. For this purpose Azevedo appeared on TV to urge austerity: "We must produce more and consume less. We must work more and with more and better output."

Labor Minister Tomas Rosa in an interview reported in New York Times (Oct. 6) was equally candid about the necessities to get the stalled economy moving. As he so charmingly stated it, the major problem was that many workers believe that: "the revolution means higher wages and shorter hours." (How absurd of them!) Although Portugal will have a trade deficit of around \$900 million this year, it has gold reserves worth \$4.2 billion, plus \$480 million of foreign exchange in the IMF bank and \$186 million of foreign exchange held by the government and commercial banks, not to mention the new loans from the U.S. and the EEC. Currently the "official rate" of unemployment is 10 to 11%, but as the NY Times states there have been no bankruptcies or layoffs since the government intervenes to stave off economic difficulties of failing companies whether nationalized or private; including offering attractive terms to ITT to remain in Portugal.



What can be concluded in Portugal is that no side is relinquishing the fight, but that the U.S. and western Europe have come out on top for the present moment. The EEC countries regard Portugal in much the same way as the U.S. has always regarded them, i.e. as utterly essential members of the western camp. In this regard, Western Europe has become increasingly anxious about the spread of political and economic instability in Southern Europe. They recognize that the growing level of class struggle may necessitate the inclusion of the Communist Party in future governments in Italy and in Spain. But even though these parties--especially the Italian--have gone out of their way to state their adherence to democratic forms and even to the maintenance of viable private capital--they are concerned about the impact of this on their alliances with the U.S. Ultimately the question of which camp a country aligns itself with is more important than its internal organization.

#### Peru: another "left" military junta

"When soldiers take over governments it does not mean that politics have come to an end; just that coups and counter coups take the place of elections." (14)

In this case, what they are referring to is the recent coup in Peru which replaced President Velasco Alvarado with General Morales Bermudez. Gen. Morales has tightened the centrist faction's control by ousting both the most radical and the most conservative factions of the army. The new and first civilian Cabinet minister Luis Barua Castaneda (Economy Ministry) is expected to encourage foreign investment. This change in command will not affect the internal policies of the country but all indications seem that this is a major setback for Moscow.

The new government has been lauded by both Washington and Havana, a noticeably strange unanimity, which the NY Times explains by citing that the regime's record in "nationalist stands against the United States and multinational companies, its extensive agrarian reform program, and its efforts to give industrial workers a share in the ownership and management of factories" . . . vs the fact that . . . "the generals have been able to attract more private investment than any of their predecessors, thanks mainly to the political stability and financial inducements as generous as those offered by more conservative governments elsewhere" (our emphasis) (15) In other words labor peace and good terms for investment.

The need to maintain "labor peace" provided the "motor" for the recent coup. Even the New York Times attributed the need for a coup to growing discontent with the Alvarado regime as indicated by "a wave of strikes due to food shortages and rising prices." (15) A more detailed look at these strikes is illuminating and provides insight into these "left" juntas and into the reception of the working class to their maneuvers. With an inflation rate of 65% and rising unemployment the Peruvian working class is experiencing the "classic" attack on its standard of living. Their reaction has been massive. In 1973 there was both a strike of fishermen at Chimbote and an 82 day miner's strike at

Cuajone. 1974 saw increased combativity by the class. In August 15,000 miners struck the state owned Centromin-Peru. The government reacted by calling this strike: "Illegal, anti-patriotic, and counter-revolutionary." This strike was followed in September by another "illegal" strike at metallurgical plants of 15,000 workers which spread to the copper mines, textile plants and to the Volvo and Pirelli factories. In December 25,000 copper miners struck. In February, 1975 riots and street fighting broke out in Lima which led to the death of hundreds and the arrest of several thousand demonstrators. The government reacted by declaring a State of Emergency thereby suspending all civil liberties. This combativity of the working class combined with growing rumors of enormous government corruption implicating the military established the necessity to stabilize the situation, which is what the coup was intended to do. Their success at this will ultimately depend, like elsewhere, on their ability to attract investment and to con the working class into thinking that they are all a part of the system in which everybody has a share. (16)

A most interesting consequence of the turn towards the U.S. and away from Russia is a cooling off of the hostilities which had been brewing between Peru and Chile.

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This is but a short list of the changes within the world balance of power since last May, but its purpose is to undermine arguments that the U.S. or imperialism in general has been weakened by the "independent--nationalist efforts of the people." In no case is any of this to the benefit of the workers of these countries, who as always will have to shoulder the burden of "national" identity. Most particularly, the question for the working class today is not national independence, which is not attainable in a meaningful way, but of revolution. Nationalism, the road of the bourgeoisie, has nothing to offer the proletariat but shackles of a different color and a new ruling class waving a red flag, mouthing the slogans of workers control but in reality implementing but another form of capitalist tyranny.

The U.S. involvement in Vietnam may indeed have been costly both financially and politically--as well as savage and stupid. Indeed it dealt a blow to nationalist fervor in the homeland, as unsuccessful and unpopular wars always do: remember Russia after the Russo-Japanese War, France after "losing" Indochina and Algeria, etc. But U.S. foreign policy and machinations continue and bear fruit.

This cannot be resolved by an official history--or by any group of intellectuals--because foreign policy is not the result of the intelligence or insight (or lack of it) of government officials but of the class interests which they serve. To be sure there are gradations of opinion within the ruling class but the common denominator of all factions is that the working class must be barred from control over its own destiny: that the world must be kept safe for capitalism.



If there has been any concurrence among the capitalist superpowers it is in winning to their respective sides those governments, who regardless of methods, can deliver the goods: a docile tractable working class willing to work hard for minimal wages. Today the governments most likely to deliver this inducement are leftist--or those in which leftists play a prominent part.

The course of struggles between capitalist blocs will be over immediate gains: vital markets, manufacturing capability and raw materials. What the Vietnam war has perhaps taught the U.S. Government is the danger of losing and the hazards of awakening domestic unrest.

Although Chomsky is right about the necessity for the government to reinstate "thought control" he is wrong as to who can thwart this process. The only human solution to unceasing increasing rounds of "colonial" wars is an international proletarian revolution. The working class never had anything but minimal gains from nationalist struggles and today even this has been demolished as a possibility. Today these nationalist struggles result in less freedom and more wretched conditions for the working class; in no strike policies and in draconian austerity programs. More than ever the alternative is posed of socialism or barbarism.

--E. Mett

2. Mac Intosh, "The Bourgeoisie Against the Crisis" (Internationalism #5).

3. C. D. Ward, "Nation or Class: Communists and the National Question" (Internationalism #7).

#### Footnotes:

1. Ramparts is not affiliated with any political group, but is a left-liberal magazine well known in the States for its muckraking and for its early opposition to the war in Indochina. Don Luce, "Reconstruction and Reconciliation: A Call" (Ramparts, Aug-Sept 1975).

2. Noam Chomsky, "The Remaking of History" (Ramparts, Aug-Sept, 1975), p. 30.

3. Ibid., p. 30.

4. Ibid., p. 54.

5. Thucydides, "Peloponnesian Wars, Book 5."

6. "The War on the Indian Sub-Continent" (Internationalism #2).

7. C. D. Ward, "India: Liberals Lament" (World Revolution #4).

8. New York Times (Sept. 30, 1975), p. 51.

9. Christopher S. Wren, "Moscow's Renewed Interest in Asia" (New York Times, The Week in Review, Sept. 14, 1975).

10. New York Times (Oct. 9, 1975), p. 1.

11. James M. Markham, "Mideast Pact Will Not Do Much for Arab Unity" (New York Times, The Week in Review, Aug. 31, 1975).

12. Economist (Oct. 11, 1975), p. 16.

13. E. Mett and Mac Intosh, "Anti-Fascism Against the Working Class" (Internationalism #6).

14. Economist (Sept. 6, 1975), p. 61.

15. Jonathan Kandell, "Peru's New President Has a Real Head Start" (New York Times, The Week in Review, Sept. 21, 1975).

16. Joseph Heller, "Catch 22." Milo Minderbinder's con as he profiteered during WWII, under the cover of a syndicate in which everyone had a share.

#### General References:

1. Angola, Ethiopia, Inter-imperialist struggle in Africa" (Internationalism/World Revolution Pamphlet #3).



# Leaflets

These are the texts of two leaflets distributed recently by Internationalism. The first one on the wage freeze and lay-offs was distributed to Sanitation and other municipal employees in August and September. The other on Portugal, which was written by World Revolution, was distributed at leftist meetings in New York and Toronto.

## the Wage Freeze & Lay-Offs

### are Only the Beginning ...

On Friday, August 1, 1975 the results of the SECRET negotiations between the City of New York, the Municipal Assistance Corp. (big MAC) and the UNIONS were made public. The unions had agreed to impose on the city workers a wage freeze which in the midst of nearly 10% inflation is in reality a 10% CUT in each worker's real wages. Increases in subway fares and tolls, and cutbacks in social services erode workers' standards of living even more. Furthermore, the unions pledged themselves to help implement new productivity quotas which will mean a SPEED UP and ADDED WORKLOAD for every worker at the same time that real wages will sharply fall. All of this is taking place in the midst of massive LAYOFFS which the unions have agreed to; since July, for instance, 1,434 sanitation workers--14% of the work force--have been laid off.

The role that the unions play as the world economic crisis deepens, and as employers and governments attempt to make the workers pay for the crisis, was indicated when John DeLury helped BREAK the strike initiated by the sanitation workers which began June 30. That role is to put an END to any resistance that the workers--in the defense of their immediate class interests--offer to the bosses and the government, and to help the capitalists and their state impose SACRIFICES and AUSTERITY PROGRAMS on the working class. The unions' role is to "negotiate" hardship and then figure out a way to make the workers "accept" it. Whenever the workers attempt to defend themselves against the effects of the deepening crisis, the unions negotiate the sell-out!

The wage freeze, the existing layoffs and the new productivity quotas (which in the case of the sanitation workers will include financial penalties for crews which do not meet their new quotas) are only the BEGINNING. The world economic crisis is getting worse and the unions will soon be in the forefront of the effort to make their members accept new and even greater sacrifices. The ideological climate within which the unions have the best chance of helping impose sacrifices on the workers was summed up by Victor Gotbaum, chairman of the Municipal Labor Committee and head of the largest city union--District Council 37--"representing" 175,000

workers when he said:

The workers are identifying with the city. (NY Times, Aug. 1, 1975)

It is the task of unions everywhere to make the workers identify with "their" city, their" nation; in other words, to make the workers identify with the system which exploits them and therefore accept the sacrifices that are imposed on them.

Yet that same strike initiated by the sanitation workers, which the union worked successfully to break, was an important effort to defend their most basic interests and to resist the effects of the growing world crisis of the capitalist system.

The crisis is not just a "passing thing"--it's going to be more and more of a reality, not just here but all over the world. Double-digit inflation is a fact of life in Western and Eastern Europe, Japan as well as the U.S. and there are already more than 15 million unemployed in the western world. The economic crisis is world-wide no matter what the system may call itself east or west. The system based on production for profits will condemn workers to increasing poverty and this situation is already forcing workers all over the world to begin to see that the only alternative to this decaying system is a new world system, socialism, based on production for human needs, fought for by the workers of all countries.

Just as realism means recognizing the reality of crisis and its effects on the working class, realism also means that there is ultimately no way out of the squeeze but to fight, sooner or later. And later means worse.

Workers begin to inflict a defeat on the bosses and the state by the very fact that they REJECT the pleas of the unions to be "realistic," to accept the need to tighten their belts and make sacrifices, and when they RESIST any attempts to make them pay for the crisis.

Decades of experience throughout the world have demonstrated that unions, no matter what changes in leadership may take place, are the agents of the bosses and the state, that unions have the function of disciplining the workers and keeping them in line; therefore any resistance to be effective must be INDEPENDENT of the unions and must be directed AGAINST them. It is only through WILDCAT STRIKES directed by committees and assemblies of workers THEMSELVES that a realistic struggle to protect workers' basic interests can begin! This is how the workers in Poland reacted to the 30% price increase instituted by the Polish government in 1970 and this is how the British dockworkers reacted to the British government's attempts to impose a wage freeze in 1972. The sanitation men's strike brought the city practically to its knees in only a few days time and demonstrated the enormous power that a workers' movement independent of the unions would have.

However, no strike of workers in one sector or industry or even one nation, no matter how determined they are, is enough. The key to resisting the cuts in the standard of living and working conditions that the city, the corporations and the unions are telling us that we must make is a GENERALIZED



struggle of workers in all sectors, industries, and countries.

The only realism is therefore to fight back, to generalize struggles under workers' effective control, to make the solidarity of all workers a living reality.

THE STRUGGLE IS ONLY BEGINNING...

8/75

## PORTUGAL--

### Down with the Phoney Revolution!

Day after day the press and the media scream at us that 'socialism' is a bit nearer in Portugal, that there's a 'revolution' going on in Portugal. This hysterical chorus only clouds the real issues which confront the Portuguese and international working class. Indeed, there's no political party of the bourgeoisie in Portugal today which doesn't fervently speak in the name of the working class, of the workers' councils, of the communist revolution. But these are all wretched lies!

#### The Lies of the Leftists

Soares' Socialist Party, pressured out of government office by the military who make up the Armed Forces Movement and the Communist Party, attacks the CP for imposing a 'dictatorship over the working class.' Soares, the toady of western imperialism, a bourgeois without conscience or scruple, claims for his part to be in favour of 'democratic socialism.' By this noble phrase he and all other Social Democrats mean nothing but cynical support for parliamentary frauds which serve to mask capitalist exploitation. 'National Reconstruction'--that's Soares' aim. And the means? Ruthless exploitation of the Portuguese proletariat, flavoured, of course, with a bit of 'democracy.'

Another capitalist faction, the Stalinists of the Communist Party--the Party of Cunhal and Co.--talk about the 'revolution' being in danger and about the threat of 'fascism' from the SP and right wing elements. They call for the workers to stop striking (as in the TAP airline strike in 1974). Furthermore, the CP supported anti-strike legislation which was implemented to counteract the independent struggle of the class.

Other so-called revolutionary factions supporting the AFM rightly sense that the lies of the SP and PCP are not very convincing to the workers. Otelo Carvalho, head of COPCON (military security force) supported by a herd of extreme leftists, declares himself against all political parties. He asserts the need for popular power to be expressed by a network of 'revolutionary councils' headed by a National Popular Assembly. Such an assembly would of course exist under the wing of the army and the rest of the bourgeois state machine. The illusion of popular control created by the Assembly would therefore help get the workers to identify with the state. Despite their eloquent boasts that they represent the highest aims of humanity,

all these factions not only have nothing to do with working class interests, but they are actively engaged in destroying them. Today, in the face of the world economic crisis, it is the left flank of the bourgeoisie which is best able to try to mobilize the working class behind the solutions of decadent capitalism.

The SP and the PCP, like their counter-revolutionary ancestors and brothers throughout the world, exist to attempt to mystify the proletariat into sacrificing its historic goals for the sake of solving the problems of capitalism in crisis. The trade unions, the economic arm of the bourgeoisie within the working class, appeared immediately after the April 1974 coup in Portugal to complement the victory of the leftist forces. The Inter-sindical, which boasts 2 million members, is dominated by the Stalinists and plays the same role in regimenting and containing the workers in Portugal as its counterparts do in the rest of the world (British TUC, French CGT and CFPD, the American AFL-CIO, etc.).

Encouraging these large capitalist parties, are, inevitably, the extreme leftists, the camp-followers and scouts of COPCON, the CP and the SP. In their vociferous chants for 'the revolution,' the proletariat is supposed to respond to that horrible battle cry of the leftist bourgeoisie, the call that served to mobilize millions of workers for the carnage of World War II: the call of anti-fascism.

#### Anti-fascism Versus the Class Struggle

Anti-fascism has been the motto of all the capitalist institutions which have benefited from the ending of the 50 year old, right-wing dictatorship in Portugal. This motto is successful when it makes the working class abandon its own historic interests as a class in favour of capitalist democracy, in that the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is deflected into dead-ends. The slogan of anti-fascism is therefore an indispensable weapon for the capitalists when workers start to threaten the whole bourgeois order. In Portugal, struggling workers find themselves branded as 'fascist agents' out to wreck 'the revolution' and the national economy. It is not surprising that the anti-fascist hysteria created by the failed Spínola coup of March 1975, diverted a nationwide strike wave into the dead end of support for leftist solutions.

#### State Capitalism

And what is the so-called revolutionary and socialist programme of the left in Portugal? Already it has shown itself to be only a policy of reorganizing capitalism in the face of the world economic crisis! Its policy of nationalizations expresses the need for capital to be increasingly rationalized and centralized. The expropriation by the state of credit interests and major industries in Portugal was not a revolutionary act but an inevitable reactionary expression of the tendency towards state capitalism which takes place in all capitalist economies. Portugal's economic backwardness forced the military to supervise the process, but it appears as a world wide phenomena--in 'democratic' countries as well as in the police states--(Russia, China, Spain, Cuba, etc.)



### The Phoney Workers' Councils

The extreme leftists--Trotskyists, Maoists, libertarians, etc.--have declared that in Portugal, along with nationalizations in industry there is also 'workers' power' exercised through 'workers' councils' and neighbourhood committees. It has even been claimed that these organizations are an expression of the movement towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. If this is so why aren't the workers in these bodies armed, why aren't these so-called workers' councils engaged in a merciless struggle to smash all capitalist institutions: the unions, the leftists, the AFM, and the rest of the bourgeois state machine? The truth is that this network of councils such as the Interempresas around Lisbon, are merely appendages of the Intersindical trade union and the 'marxist' groupings in the AFM. They are barriers to the real autonomous struggles of the workers.

But the truly revolting aspect of all these frauds about 'workers' councils' is that the Portuguese leftists--heartily endorsed by their associates world wide, are continuously debasing the very concept of autonomous class struggle and its organizational expressions. The more the words 'workers' councils' are bandied around in Portugal, the more will the proletariat find it difficult to really identify with the need for the real ones. Only deceit, slander, and co-optation into capitalism ooze out of the present Portuguese 'workers' councils.' The real workers' councils which will arise in the future, will have nothing to do with these sham organs of the bourgeoisie!

### The Proletarian Resistance

The present instability of the different leftist factions in Portugal testifies that their programme of solving the economic crisis by using the working class as cannon-fodder is failing. The proletariat is refusing to play along with them. Yet a solution to the economic crisis in Portugal must still be attempted by the bourgeoisie. The unemployment rate is 10% and is being worsened by the return of large numbers of Portuguese settlers from the ex-colonies. Production will fall by approximately 25% this year, and foreign reserves are almost dry, so it is understandable that strong support for the Portuguese economy from one imperialist bloc is necessary. The U.S. has already warned the Russians not to interfere in Portugal. However, the western imperialisms are not prepared to commit their aid to Portugal until the proletariat has been tamed and law and order reigns supreme. The consolidation of capitalist political power in Portugal whether in the hands of the moderates or the leftists around Carvalho, depends therefore on a decisive curtailment of proletarian combativity.

Whatever tricks and deceits the Portuguese bourgeoisie attempts in the future, the workers must remember that they can only rely on themselves in their autonomous class struggle. The only response the workers can make to the economic crisis is to struggle in a unified and independent manner, through their own genuinely autonomous organizations. This will inevitably lead the working class to confront the very cause of the crisis,

world capitalism, and to launch an offensive against all its flunkeys. This is the historic task of the proletariat, yesterday, today and tomorrow; in Portugal, in America, throughout the world!

DOWN WITH THE LEFTIST CARNIVAL OF THE BOURGEOISIE!

DOWN WITH THE FAKE 'WORKERS' COUNCILS' IN PORTUGAL!

FOR THE INDEPENDENT REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT AGAINST CAPITALISM!

9/75



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# Basic Principles

Internationalism is the publication of the North American group of the International Communist Current.

We trace our origins in the Marxist revolutionary movement, especially from the First International and those tendencies in the Second International which maintained a revolutionary perspective in the reformist period of capitalist ascendancy. With the outbreak of the First World War, we see the revolutionary tradition continuing through those tendencies such as the Bolsheviks and Spartacists, which took revolutionary stances against the imperialist carnage and began to split from the militarist and chauvinist Second International, and later formed the Third International in 1919. With the passing of the Third International to the camp of the bourgeoisie, a process accompanied by the counter-revolution in Russia, we identify with those "ultra-left" groups which criticized the degenerating Comintern from the left in the early 20's (KAPD, Workers' Dreadnought, the Italian Left, etc). Though the criticisms of these tendencies provide in themselves only a partial critique of Bolshevism and the old (now non-existent) workers' movement, their contributions are essential to the reconstruction of a higher revolutionary synthesis expressing the historical and present needs of the revolutionary working class.

Today the ICC defends the following basic class positions, basic lessons of the historical struggle of the working class.

Since the First World War, capitalism has been an entirely decadent social system which has nothing to offer the working class and humanity as a whole except cycles of crises, wars and reconstructions. Its irreversible historical decay poses the single alternative for humanity: socialism or barbarism.

The working class is the only class capable of leading the communist revolution against capitalism.

The revolutionary struggle of the proletariat must inevitably lead the working class to a confrontation with the capitalist state. Once the working class emerges triumphant by destroying the latter, it will constitute the dictatorship of the proletariat--a world wide and immediate task.

The form of the dictatorship is the international power of the workers' councils.

The role of the revolutionary organization is not to 'organize the working class' or to take power 'on behalf of workers' but to assist in the active generalization of the communist goals and revolutionary consciousness within the working class.

Socialism, the mode of social reproduction initiated by the workers' councils, is not 'workers' self-management or 'nationalizations'. Socialism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations based on the law of value,

such as wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers, and the construction of a world human community.

The so-called 'socialist' countries (Russia, the Eastern bloc, China, Cuba, etc.) are a particular expression of the universal tendency toward state capitalism, itself an expression of the decline of capitalism. There are no 'socialist countries' on this planet and the above-mentioned countries are just so many capitalist bastions to be stormed by the world proletariat in the next world revolutionary wave.

In this epoch the trade unions everywhere are organs of capitalist discipline within the proletariat.

All forms of 'popular fronts', 'united fronts', 'anti-fascist resistances', together with all participation in bourgeois elections and parliaments, are reactionary mystifications and attacks against the working class. The specific role of these activities is to sabotage the autonomy of the class, demoralize its ranks and fragment any revolutionary initiative towards the communist revolution.

So-called 'national liberation struggles' are moments in the deadly struggle of imperialist powers large and small to gain control over the world market. The slogan of 'support for people in struggle' amounts in fact, to defending one imperialist power against another under nationalist or 'socialist' verbiage.

The Communist, Socialist and Social Democratic Parties, plus their usual leftist camp followers - Trotskyists, Maoists and anarchists - are the Left of capitalism's political apparatus and as such will be combatted and destroyed by the proletariat.

## Our activity:

The vital theoretical elaboration demanded by the re-awakening of the proletarian struggle after fifty years of counter-revolution.

Organized intervention, on an international scale, in the struggles of the proletariat, in order to contribute to the process which leads to the self-organization and revolutionary action of the working class.

235-4472

## INTERNATIONALISM

